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ECLECTIC READINGS

LITTLE STORIES
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Blanche of Castile and Louis IX

Little Stories of France

BY

Mrs. MAUDE BARROWS (DUTTON) *Lynch*

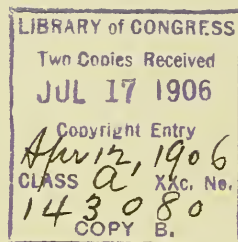
AUTHOR OF "THE WORLD AT WORK IN FIELD AND PASTURE"

WITH A PREFACE BY

SAMUEL T. DUTTON



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LITTLE STORIES OF FRANCE.

W. P. 1



PREFACE

THE child needs the background of history as an aid to the interpretation of his experience and for the understanding of current events. In our cosmopolitan life, since we are in close touch with all peoples and are constantly hearing about them, there is need at least of the simplest elementary facts in the history of the great nations. The French people have held such a central position in the world's affairs, and have contributed so much to civilization, that the young student should at an early stage possess himself of the outlines of their history. He is then enabled to put together the past and present of that interesting country and to view the one in the light of the other. Then, too, the fact that French is the first foreign language which American children are expected to study is another valid reason for placing before them in its most interesting form the main facts of French history.

These little stories may be read by children from seven to fourteen years of age. They may be read while the geography of France is being

studied, so that the subject may be clothed with human interest and so made more valuable.

These stories are about kings and courts in the days when peace had fewer advocates than now, but they are so written that there is nothing in them which cannot be read with profit, and the picturesque, agreeable aspects of the narrative are given prominence.

SAMUEL T. DUTTON.

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LITTLE STORIES OF FRANCE



FRANCE OF LONG AGO

A LONG, long time ago, many years before Christ was born, the country that we now know as France was called Gaul. Dense, green forests spread over the hills and covered the plains. Rivers flowed for miles and miles through nothing but wilderness. But occasionally, deep in the heart of the forest, on the bank of one of these rivers, would be a clearing. Here the Gauls had cut down the trees and built their earth huts, which were high and pointed like haystacks.

The Gauls who lived in these little settlements were very tall and strong. They had blue eyes and yellow hair, which they sometimes dyed red, so that they might look terrible in battle. When the men were not away fighting, they spent all their time hunting and fishing. They would steal away, in the early morning, far into the green

woods, and then come proudly home at evening dragging behind them the buffaloes or wild boars which they had killed.

Their wives came out joyfully to meet them, and sat down on the ground with them to skin the animals. When they had taken off the whole hide, they spread it in the sun to dry, for they made all their clothing from the skins of wild animals.

Meanwhile the little boys and girls had been gathering sticks and underbrush into a big pile, and over it had hung the iron kettle. When all was ready, they struck fire from flint stones, for they had no matches in those days, and soon the kettle was boiling merrily. Into this their mothers threw big pieces of meat, and presently they were having a fine feast there, deep within the wood.

There were no schools for these boys and girls, but the priests or Druids were their teachers. The Druids could not teach the children much, but they used to gather them beneath some large sheltering oak and tell them stories and teach them songs. These stories were always about their fathers and grandfathers and great-grandfathers ; stories of how they had always loved justice, avenged insult, and been brave and fearless even unto death. And the songs the children learned were something like this : —

“Our fathers have drawn their swords against kings and the raging ocean. They have hurled their arrows against the thunder and the lightning. They have feared nothing except that the sky should fall upon their heads.”

Then the boys would jump to their feet, shouting: “We will be like them! We, too, will be brave fighters!”

Often on a bright starlight night the whole tribe gathered together around the Druids. The bards, too, were there with their harps to sing of the glory of their ancestors and their splendid victories. Then a great silence fell on the people, when suddenly the chief of the Druids, an old man with a flowing white beard, dressed in a loose white robe, came forth from the sacred grotto carrying a golden sickle in his hand. Slowly he walked over to his rude altar, often merely a large flat stone placed on a rock, and there burned the sacrifice. Then he cut from the branches of the oak sprays of gray-green mistletoe, and gave a piece to each one in the tribe to carry home as a remembrance of the sacred forest meeting.

VERCINGETORIX, THE BRAVEST OF THE GAULS

As the tribes scattered over Gaul grew larger and larger, they were nearly always at war with one another, instead of cultivating their fields and building towns. Then, when the fighting was over, the victorious warriors would give a great feast. If a traveling merchant happened to be passing through the village at such a time of festivity, he would be brought in to the feast to tell tales of his country and his people. The weary peddler would take his place among the warriors and perhaps tell them some such story as the following, of which they seemed never to tire.

“My home is in Italy, far away from here, over the snow-covered Alps. It is in a southern land, where the sky is always blue and the sun shines warm and bright, and flowers bloom all the year round. My people are the strongest, the bravest, and most powerful people in the world. They have a noble city, Rome, for their capital, and they call themselves after it, Romans. My people are proud of their city, Rome, but they are prouder still of their Roman army. This army has marched into many countries and everywhere it is victorious. Soon Rome shall be mistress of the world!”

Then he ended by telling them about the splendors of Roman dress and Roman banquets, and spread out his wares that they might see for themselves. And the Gauls bought them eagerly, for they longed to be as fine as the Romans.

When the merchant had sold all his goods, he journeyed back to Rome, and told his people a tale that they were no less anxious to hear. It was of broad, fertile fields lying at waste, and many small clans so busy fighting one another that a Roman army could easily conquer them.

Slowly the Roman army began to move toward Gaul. One day it seized one town, a little later another. The Gauls, busy with their petty warfare, paid no attention to the invaders. Not until word reached the border land that Cæsar was coming did the Gauls realize their danger. They had all heard of Cæsar, Rome's greatest general.

A young mountain chief, Vercingetorix, finally aroused the Gauls. He besought them to unite against Cæsar. At length they did so, and put Vercingetorix at their head; but it was too late. Cæsar, with his legions of trained soldiers, was in their very midst. All the Gallic chief could do was to retire into the stronghold of Alesia, and send out his cavalry to beseech the tribes of Gaul to come to his aid. On Cæsar came, surrounded

the city, and ordered his men to dig a deep ditch about it.

Day by day, Vercingetorix watched for his friends. At last he saw an immense army hurrying to his aid. Rallying his men, he rushed forth from his stronghold to meet them. Then he saw Cæsar's trap. The big ditch held him within his fortress, and kept his friends outside. The Gauls fought like lions, but could not unite their two forces. At the end of three days the army that had come to help Vercingetorix retreated, leaving the plains covered with the slain. Vercingetorix saw that he was conquered. He led his men back into Alesia.

The next morning, when Cæsar was sitting in his high tribunal, within the Roman lines, a splendid horseman galloped up to him and drew rein. He sprang from his horse, threw his weapons at Cæsar's feet, and stood with arms folded, silently awaiting his doom. It was Vercingetorix. Cæsar, the cruel conqueror, looked a moment at the brave young hero, then bade his men load him with chains. A few months later, when Cæsar returned to Rome as the conqueror of all Gaul, Vercingetorix was dragged behind his chariot in the triumphal procession. Six years of imprisonment followed and then Vercingetorix was put to death.

Gaul was now a province of mighty Rome.

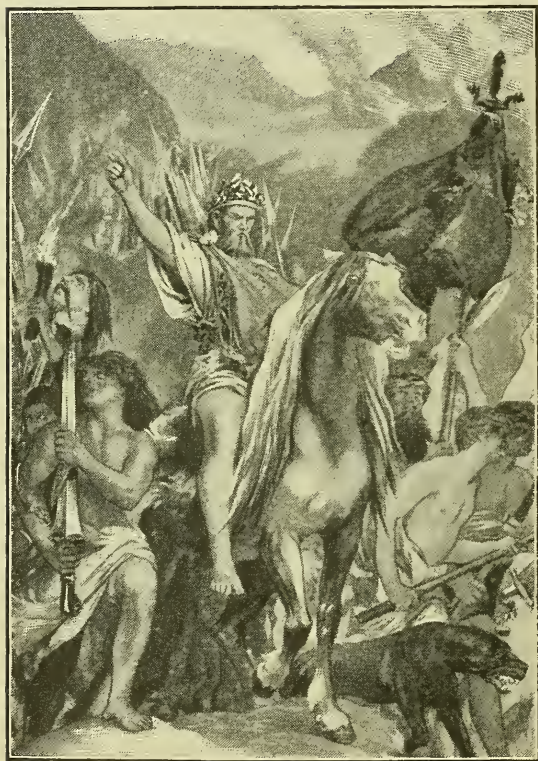
SAINTE GENEVIÈVE

THE Romans taught the Gauls many things. First of all they made long straight roadways through the entire province, reaching from one end of Gaul to the other; next they built bridges over the rivers. In the settlements they built houses, theaters, and great baths, until a little village grew into a large Roman town, sometimes fortified by a Roman wall. So well did the Romans build their walls and baths that the ruins of some of them are standing to-day.

Then the Romans showed the Gauls how to till the fields and sow seed, and taught them how to dig minerals and iron out of their mines. Druidism was gradually given up for the religion of Rome. So, little by little, the Gauls gave up their life of fighting and began to look upon the Romans, who had done so much for their land, not as conquerors but as friends.

Into this peaceful Romanized Gaul a new enemy now pushed its way. The Germans came down from the north like a cloud-burst out of a clear sky. They came, great giants of men, blue-eyed, red-haired, and wearing about their bodies the long-haired, shaggy skins of wild animals. They hated cities and towns, and all the works of peace. They

lived to hunt animals and fight men. The Gauls fell back before them, faint-hearted. They had forgotten their bravery of former days and their love of war. They cried to Rome for help, but the Roman



Attila

Empire was now so vast that it did not have armies enough to protect all its provinces. The Germans swarmed down through Gaul, and one tribe of them, the Franks, settled there and gave their name to the land. The Parisii, a small Gallic tribe, were the first settlers of the town that after-

ward grew into the great city of Paris.

Then there came another foe, the Huns, a horde of wild horsemen from the heart of Asia. These little, short, black-haired men slept, ate, and fought in the saddle. Headed by their king, Attila, they swept across Europe, plundering and burning.

Ever nearer and nearer Paris drew this troop of barbarians. At last the people decided to flee for their lives, and leave their city to Attila's mercy. One voice alone arose, saying: "Calm your fears. Stay, stay in your beloved Paris. Attila shall be turned from his course. He shall not burn a single house. His sword shall not slay one of you."

This was the cry of neither warrior nor king. It came from the lips of a gentle, quiet woman, whom many of the people had often seen kneeling in prayer, or carrying food and clothing to the poor. Her name was Geneviève, and she was the daughter of simple country folk. But there had always been something about Geneviève that made her seem different from others, even when she was a little girl.

One day there was great excitement in the village where she lived, because the bishop was coming. Geneviève left her sheep on the hillside that she might go with her parents to hear the good man speak. The bishop noticed the little seven-year-old maid who was listening so eagerly to what he said. He seemed to know then that she had some great work to do in the future. Calling her to him, he hung about her neck a small coin on which was a sign of the cross, and told her that she was chosen to be the handmaiden of the Lord. Geneviève, as she sat tending her sheep day by day, often put up

her hand to feel if the coin were still about her neck. She thought again of the bishop's kind face and wondered what his words to her had meant.

There are many legends told of the wonderful things connected with Geneviève while she was still a little girl. Once, it was said, her mother boxed Geneviève's ears in anger. The next moment the mother was struck blind. For many months she sat in darkness, until the prayers of her little daughter at length brought back her sight.

When Geneviève's parents died, the young girl went to Paris to live with an aged aunt. Here it was that she heard of the Huns, and how the people of Paris feared them. At the same time a voice seemed to come from within her, telling her that she must calm the people and keep them from letting the city fall into the hands of the barbarians. Geneviève believed this to be God's voice. Although she had always been so shy and quiet, now she went forth into the streets and spoke to the terror-stricken men and women, urging them to defend the city. Perhaps the little coin about her neck gave her courage.

Her calmness and sweetness won the people's hearts. They crowded about her to listen to her reassuring words. They believed her. "We will not flee," they cried at last. "We will stay."



Sainte Geneviève

In a few days they learned that Attila and the Huns had passed the city of Paris by and had met a terrible defeat.

Geneviève lived to be nearly ninety years old, devoting her life to helping the poor and needy. All the people in Paris loved and honored her, and many buildings in the city to-day bear her name.

CLOVIS

ONE of the Frankish chiefs who fought most valiantly against the Huns was named Meroveus. After his death the people chose their kings from his family and called them Merovingians. One Merovingian lad, named Clovis, was made ruler at the age of fifteen. Never was a king more ambitious than he. At the age of twenty we find him inducing another Frankish chieftain to join with him against a hostile neighbor. Together their army counted five thousand warriors. Clovis was successful, and after the battle the warriors gathered at Soissons to divide the booty.

Now among the plunder there was a vase belonging to the church, and the archbishop besought Clovis that this be returned to its proper place. "If in the partition the vase falls to my lot," replied Clovis, "I will honor the archbishop's wishes."

So, when the men were gathered together, the young king stepped forward. "Valiant warriors," he spoke, "I pray you not to refuse me, over and above my share, this vase." And the assembly replied, "Glorious king, everything that we see here is thine, and we ourselves are submissive to thy commands. Do thou as seemeth good to thee, for there is none that can resist thy power."

But there was one Frank who was jealous of Clovis, and this humble reply of the warriors angered him. As they ceased speaking he flung his battle ax high over his shoulder, and brought it down upon the vase. "Thou shalt have nought of the booty save what the lots fairly give thee," he shouted. The king made no reply.

The next spring, Clovis called his troops together that he might review them. As he rode down the line his eyes fell on the face of the warrior who had shattered the vase at Soissons. He stopped before him. "None have brought here," he cried, "arms so ill kept as thine. Nor lance, nor sword, nor battle ax is fit for service." And seizing the man's ax, he flung it on the ground. The man stooped to pick it up. As he did so, the king raised his own ax, and slew the warrior at his feet. "It shall be done to thee as thou didst to the vase of Soissons," said the king.

The Gauls were at first afraid of this cruel and fearless king, but he won their confidence by marrying Clotilda, a Gallic princess. Clovis had often heard of this princess. He knew that an ambitious uncle had put her parents to death, and had sent the beautiful Clotilda into exile. Far away in Geneva she was spending her days, shut up in a castle. She was allowed to see but few people, and Clovis bethought himself how he could reach her with a messenger. Finally he called before him a certain Roman, Aurelian, and bade him use his wits to gain entrance to the princess.

So Aurelian dressed himself in rags and begged admittance at Clotilda's door. The supposed pilgrim was allowed to enter, and, as the princess was washing his feet,—for she delighted in deeds of charity,—Aurelian bent forward and showed her the royal ring.

“Clovis, King of the Franks,” he said, “hath sent me to thee. If it be the will of God, he would fain raise thee to his high rank by marriage. And that thou mayst be satisfied thereof he sendeth thee this ring.”

Clotilda took the ring with great joy, and gave one of her own to the messenger to return to Clovis.

After they were married, one thing worried the queen. Clovis was a barbarian and she was a

Christian. She begged him in vain to give up his idols for her God. One day in battle, however, when the Franks were being beaten, Clovis cried out in despair: —

“O God, whom Clotilda calls the true God, if Thou wilt give me victory, I will believe in Thee!”



The Vow of Clovis

The tide of battle turned, and Clovis won. Soon after, he and his whole army were baptized Christians. When Clovis walked into the church, which was beautifully decorated with flowers and fragrant with the burning incense, he asked:—

“Is this the heaven you promised me?”

“No,” replied the bishop, “but the road leading to it.”

Still, the baptism was not enough to change the heart of Clovis. He was very cruel, and put to death many of the Frankish chiefs that he might be sole master. He died on the little island city of Paris, which he had chosen for his capital.

KING DAGOBERT THE GOOD

CLOVIS divided his kingdom among his three sons, who were as wicked and cruel as their father had been. When one of them died, leaving his three little boys in the care of their grandmother, Clotilda, the uncles of the children sent her a sword and a pair of scissors, with this message:—

“Thy sons await thy wishes concerning the children. Shall they be slain or shorn?”

Now short hair was considered a disgrace by the Merovingians, who always wore their long locks hanging down over their shoulders. So Clotilda answered, sadly but proudly:—

“Let them be slain rather than shorn.”

At this reply the uncles seized two of the little boys and killed them. The third escaped and was brought up as a priest. When he died he was

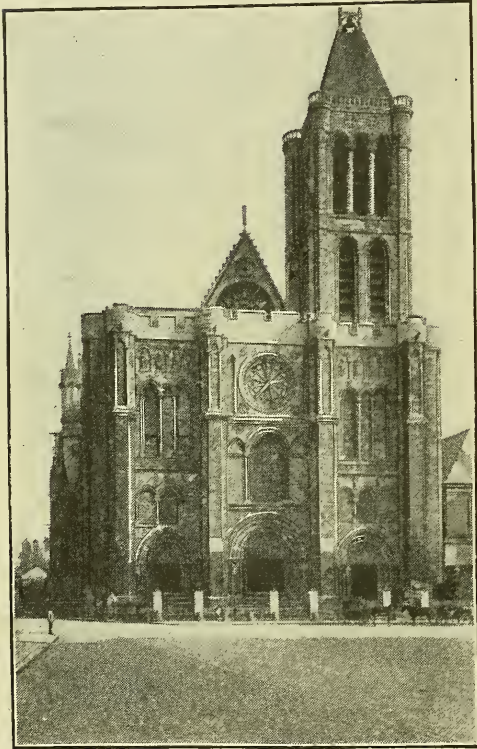
looked upon as a saint, and a pretty little village outside of Paris was named after him, Saint Cloud.

About this time, Benedict, an Italian monk, began to found monasteries among the hills of his own country, and later in France. His motto was: "It is honorable for a man to work with his hands." This teaching was a great blessing to France, for the lazy Frankish noblemen looked with contempt upon the peasants, whose hands were black and hard from laboring in the fields. The monasteries founded by the monk Benedict were called after him, Benedictine. They were soon filled with hundreds of men who flocked to them to join in Benedict's four great tasks, — working, singing, building, and writing.

But this was chiefly a period of wars and crimes, when the people of Gaul were far from being happy. Finally, Dagobert, a grandson of one of the cruel brothers of Clovis, became king, and affairs began to improve. He set up a splendid court at Paris, making friends of the nobles and giving them gifts of land for their homes. He reissued the Frankish laws, and journeyed through his land to see that these laws were justly administered. Thus his people came to know and love their king, because he did so much for their good.

He delighted also in beautiful buildings. A short

distance from Paris he built an abbey, which is standing to-day, and named it after Saint Denis, who had been one of the first Christian martyrs in Gaul. Here in this church lies buried the good King Dagobert, the greatest of the Merovingians.



St. Denis

The kings who followed Dagobert were weak and almost powerless. They lived in poverty-stricken country houses where they held miserable court. Their subjects seldom saw them, for they went out among the people only on state occasions, and

then rode in a cart drawn by oxen and driven by a cowherd. They soon lost what power they had, because of their laziness, and bear the name in history of "the do-nothing kings."

PEPIN THE SHORT

SINCE the Merovingians were now mere shadow kings, some of the more capable officers began to govern in their stead, under the name of Mayors of the Palace. At last, one of these men, Pepin, became ambitious to be called king, but he feared to seize the crown, for the people still clung to the long-haired Merovingians as their rulers. So Pepin sent this message to the Pope at Rome:—

“Who ought to be king,—the man who is powerless, but who bears the name; or he who holds not the name, but all the power?”

The Pope's answer ran:—

“The man who holds the power ought also to bear the name of king.”

So the last Merovingian had his long hair cut off and was led sadly away to a monastery, while Pepin was crowned king of France with great pomp in the cathedral at Soissons.

Pepin must have been a very small man, for he was nicknamed “Pepin the Short.” The nobles used to make fun of him because of his size, and say to one another that such a little man could not be brave and strong. But one day the king taught them a lesson. He was seated with his nobles at a spectacle in the amphitheater, when a lion burst

forth into the arena and sprang upon a bull. Up rose the little king and shouted : —

“ Frankish nobles, who will separate the two beasts? ”

No one moved. Pepin waited an instant, then rushed into the arena and, with a single blow of his sword, cut off the head of both the bull and the lion. After that no one dared laugh at his size.

Pepin's reign was full of wars and struggles. When the king of the Lombards marched against Rome, the Pope fled in terror to Gaul. Pepin received him kindly, treated him with great reverence and promised to go with his own troops to fight the Pope's enemy. True to his pledge, he crossed the Alps and defeated the Lombards. The lands that the Lombards had conquered were surrendered to Pepin, and he, being a noble-minded king, gave them back to their rightful owner. A year later the Lombards again attacked Rome. Loudly the Pope called for his Frankish champion, and once more Pepin went into Italy and defeated the Lombards.

Pepin found much to busy himself with in his own land, too. He discovered that all the schools had died out except those for boys who were to become priests. He found there were few laws in his kingdom. So he set out to improve his realm and bring all his people under his guidance and control.

CHARLEMAGNE

CHARLES, who ruled after the death of his father, Pepin, was such a grand and noble king that he not only won for himself the name of Charlemagne, which means "Charles the Great," but also gave the name of Carlovingians to all the kings of his family who ruled after him.

He spent his boyhood on one of his father's large estates, learning battle songs, riding off to the chase, and hunting the wild animals in the forests. But there was no school for the little Charles to attend, so when he grew up and became king he could neither read nor write. This was such a mortification to him that he began to study, as a man, what boys and girls study nowadays. He invited the learned men from all the different lands to come to read and talk to him. He studied hard, and at last learned both to read and to speak Latin, and to read Greek. But what was hardest for him was to learn to write. He had little time during the day to practice, so he kept a tablet under his pillow and when he could not sleep he tried to form the letters. But the task proved too hard. His fingers were so stiff that he gave up the attempt.

One day two Scotchmen knocked at the castle gate and said they had come to sell the king knowl-

edge. Charlemagne ordered them to be brought before him and asked what they meant.

“Let us have,” they replied, “a schoolroom and some boys to teach. In return for this, you are to give us food and clothes.”

Charlemagne, delighted, gave them a large room in the palace and a number of boys, some noble-men’s sons and some peasant lads. Just then war called the king away, but on his return home he at once bade the Scotchmen bring before him all their pupils, and show him the work they had accomplished. The poor boys came carrying finished work, very well done, but the rich boys had nothing completed to show the king. Charlemagne turned to the industrious lads, his face shining with joy.

“My children,” he said, “you have done your duty. Go on working, and when you are men, I will give you lands and important offices.”

Then his face darkened as he turned to the others, and he cried in a stern voice : —

“Idle young noblemen, you trusted in your wealth and birth, and disobeyed me. Know now that if you do not make up for this idleness by good hard work, you may never expect anything from me.”

Charlemagne loved justice. He punished many robbers, and always protected the honest people.

He had all the old and the new laws written down, so that they should not be forgotten. He even had a great bell hung outside the castle that could be rung day or night, by any one demanding justice.

There is a story that once a bony, lame old horse, gnawing at the moss on the gate pulled the bell and rang it. Charlemagne called the master of the poor animal before him, and leading out the horse said:—

“Do you not blush to drive out into the highway to die a beast that has grown old serving you? Take the horse back, feed and care for him, or fear my wrath.”

But the king was often called away from his schools and courts to go to war. An old monk has written a description of the approach of Charlemagne with his army. At first it was “like a black cloud—but as the emperor drew nearer and nearer the gleam of arms caused to shine on the people shut up within the city a day more gloomy than any kind of night. And then appeared Charles himself, that man of steel with his head incased in a helmet of steel,—his hands garnished with gauntlets of steel,—his left arm armed with a lance of steel which he held aloft in the air. And what shall we say of his boots? All the army were wont to have them of steel. His horse was of the color

and strength of steel. All those who went before the monarch, all those who marched at his side, all those who followed after, even the whole mass of his army, had armor of the like sort. The fields and highways were covered with steel; and the points of steel reflected the rays of the sun; and this steel, so hard, was borne by a people with hearts still harder. The flash of steel spread terror throughout the streets of the city. What steel! Alack, what steel!"

Ever conquering, Charlemagne soon had a kingdom twice as large as his father's had been. In the year 800 he went down into Italy, as Pepin had done, to aid the Romans against the Lombards. The Pope received him at the gates of Rome, and Charlemagne, like a pilgrim, visited all the churches in the city. On Christmas Day he attended mass in St. Peter's, and as he was kneeling in prayer the Pope placed a crown on his head while all the people shouted: "Long live Charles Augustus, crowned by God the Emperor of the Romans!"

The last years of Charlemagne's life were spent in protecting the far-lying borders of his realm. Many were the long wars that the bordering people made upon him. When he felt that he was too old to reign longer, he called an assembly of the Franks, and crowned his oldest son, Louis, emperor in his



Coronation of Charlemagne

stead. He then passed his last months in Aix-la-Chapelle, a city which he had founded himself and loved dearly. He caused great baths to be built here in imitation of those of the ancient Romans. Charlemagne was fond of swimming, and often invited his sons, his friends, and sometimes his soldiers, to come and bathe with him. There were often as many as five hundred people bathing together in the royal bath.

Charlemagne loved the hunt, also, and after he had given over the cares of his kingdom to his son Louis, he often rode into the forest of Ardenne.

But with winter his strength failed him. A fever came on and the king sank lower and lower.

He died in 814, and was buried in his cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle.

ROLAND AND HIS GOOD SWORD DURANDAL

OF all the knights of Charlemagne's court none was so well beloved by the king as Roland. He loved Roland not alone because he was his nephew, but because he was the bravest and strongest of all his knights. When Roland was only a squire riding into battle unarmed, he had shown such courage and strength that the king had him knighted upon the field. Nor did he give him on that day any ordinary sword, but one set with jewels, whose blade flashed like fire, and which bore the motto, cut deep into its steel, "I am Durandal, which the Trojan Hector wore." And as the young boy with his hand on the sword took the oath of knighthood, great was the rejoicing among the king's men, for all loved Roland. Only one of the knights, Ganelon, stood in the background, a dark scowl on his face. He was jealous that so young a lad should have golden spurs laced to his ankles. He was jealous of the wonderful sword, and jealous of the king's favor. Within his heart he

was already plotting how he could do Roland an injury. For years he tried in vain to bring him harm, for Roland could ride a horse and hurl a lance as no other knight. But, at last, in the old age of Charlemagne, Ganelon's chance came. The white-haired king was weary of war and sent Ganelon to the Moors to treat for peace. As the mounted knight rode down through Spain he turned over in his mind how the opportunity had now come to slay Roland. In his jealousy against Roland he even became a traitor to the king. Instead of bringing Charlemagne's message, these are the words he spoke to Marsilius the Moor.

“Charlemagne, my mighty lord, is old. The years of his life are numbered. But at his side rides his nephew, Roland, who is to be feared above ten thousand men. Now send ye a great store of wealth to the king, with promises that at Michaelmas ye will come to Aix and, accepting his faith, do him homage for Spain. My white-haired king is tired of this long war. He will hear these words with gladness and return to France.” Then Ganelon lowered his voice so that Marsilius alone could hear his words. “On the homeward march through the mountain passes Roland shall take the rear guard. A hundred thousand Moors could easily o’ercome him there.”

These words were enough. Laden with riches the false knight rode back with his false promises to the king.

Thus it was that in the pass of the Vale of Thorns, as Roland was guarding the rear line of march, his trusty brother-in-arms, Oliver, came to him, crying:—

“Roland, Roland, blow thy horn for the king to come back to our aid! The Moors are following us.”

“If battle there must be, my sword Durandal will protect us. Roland begs aid of no man,” was the proud knight’s reply.

Three times Oliver besought him to wind his horn, and three times Roland refused. The pagan host swept upon them, and Roland and Oliver, giving the war cry of Charlemagne, led their men into the unequal fight. Little by little the battle went against the French, but not until every man was slain did Roland blow his horn for help. The hero himself was wounded in a dozen places. From afar he heard the six hundred trumpets of Charlemagne’s host reply to his call, but he knew he could not live to see the king. With his ivory horn in one hand and his sword in the other, he climbed a little hill and lay down beneath a pine tree. As he looked upon the gleaming blade of his sword a great fear came over him lest the pagan Moors should find

and seize it. Gathering all his strength he strove ten times to break the steel against a mighty rock. The rock was shattered to atoms, but the sword was as bright and whole as ever. Bravely then he placed his true sword and horn beneath him, and lay down with his face towards the foe. Thus did Charlemagne find him and bring the dead hero's body and arms back to France, the country that he had so long and loyally served.

Nor did Ganelon live to enjoy his triumph. He was riding by the king's side when the clear note of Roland's horn was heard in the distance. When Charlemagne turned to give the order for the army to ride at full speed to Roland's aid, Ganelon put his hand on the king's rein. "Roland is but boasting of a hare that he has caught," he cried scornfully. The good king read the look of treason in Ganelon's face. He ordered his men to unarm him, and hold him prisoner until he should return.

The sight that met Charlemagne's eyes in the Vale of Thorns convinced him of Ganelon's treachery. When the latter was brought before the king for trial Charlemagne turned to his knights: —

"Of what punishment is he worthy who betrayed my kingdom for gold, and who treacherously took from me twenty thousand of my host, and my nephew, the brave knight Roland?"

And one word rang through the great hall, sent up from many throats:—

“Death! Death! Death!”

SEA DRAGONS FROM THE NORTH

CHARLEMAGNE had been such a noble man and such a hero in war that all the different nations in his great empire looked up to him and admired him. Louis inherited his father's love of learning but none of his spirit in war. He looked in horror upon the rough, barbarous soldiers. Such an amiable and gentle king he was that his people called him Louis the Pious. Louis had three sons, and when they were old enough he gave them each a portion of his kingdom, for he little liked protecting such an immense realm as his father had left him. But this only brought on more wars. The sons became dissatisfied with their portions, and one by one they rose against their father. At last, on a great plain, ever since called “The Field of Lies” because here the three sons broke all their promises to their father, they defeated him in battle. The poor old man was led from the field into a church, and there forced to kneel before his wicked sons and read a long list of his sins. Then they tore off his royal armor and, dressing him in the robe of a penitent,

led him to a monastery, where he spent his few remaining years. Perhaps he was happier there, living peacefully among the monks, who were the most learned men of their time. His sons now fell to fighting one another, and many years of cruel warfare followed.

Meanwhile, the people of France were being terror-stricken by strange looking boats, full of armed men, that were sailing up their rivers.

These boats were the ships of the Norsemen. A good east wind, which filled out their sails, brought them in three days from Denmark to the coast of France. Sea dragons they were called, and sea dragons they were in very truth. As in the wild hordes of the Huns, horse and man seemed but one creature, so did the Norsemen and their peaked-prowed ships appear equally united. The boats were lightly built, and though the Norsemen lost many a crew in the storms, the survivors still sailed over the surging seas and laughed in scorn at wind and wave.

Norway was the home of these wild men, but they had long neglected their fields to roam the sea. Wherever the sea could take them, there they went with flying sail and gleaming oar. And when winter came they drove their long keels ashore and plundered the land.

Their favorite hunting ground was England, but they soon discovered that another fertile country lay across the channel. With terror the French peasants now saw the Norse pirates coming upon them, singing strange songs about the tempest and the hurricanes.

One winter, when the emperor, Charles the Fat, was away in Germany, seven hundred of the Norse boats sailed up the Seine and attacked Paris. Three brave captains in Paris called together the people, bade them fortify their walls, and be of good cheer for the emperor would surely come to their aid. Eighteen months the citizens of Paris stayed within their city throwing down stones, arrows, and boiling oil on the Norsemen. For eighteen months they grew thin and hollow-eyed for lack of food, and still they did not lose heart. Then Charles the Fat came. The Parisians anxiously awaited to see the royal troops put to flight their hated foe. But the feeble emperor had another plan.

"I beg you to tell me," he said to the Norse leaders, "how much silver I must give you to make you leave the city unharmed?"

"Seven hundred pounds," was the reply.

When the people of Paris heard of this, they broke forth in rage from their city and single handed drove the Norsemen from the Seine. The weak old

Emperor Charles had no desire to live among such warlike people. He went quietly back to Germany.

The Norsemen never besieged Paris again. They began to settle the country at the mouth of the Seine, and gradually, losing their warlike ways, they filled their province, called Normandy, with cultivated fields and fortified towns.

THE CAPETIAN KINGS

CHARLES THE FAT had chosen the wisest course. The French people were very angry because he declined to fight the Norsemen, and had their revenge by refusing now to own him as emperor. They began to look for another ruler.

There was in France at this time many a great chief who lived in a strong castle built on a high cliff and overlooking wide valleys. In the morning these chiefs rode forth from their castles on prancing horses to fight or hunt, and returned at evening to feast in their large dining halls. These halls were very long, with high walls on which hung the ancestral armor, and trophies won in battle. At one end of the room on a long platform sat the lady of the castle with her daughters, winding or spinning yarn, and near by were the minstrels with

their harps, who played and sang till the roof echoed.

When the chief went out and walked about his wall, he saw hundreds of peasants' cottages below in his fields. These peasants had come to him at the time of the war with the Norsemen, and said:—

“Good knight, if you will protect us from these terrible barbarians, we will till your fields and sow your grain, when you are away at war, so that your barns shall still be full when you return.”

And the chief had answered:—

“So be it. If you will care for my fields, I will defend you from the Norsemen.”

One of the bravest of these chiefs was Hugh Capet, so the French chose him now as king. Although a brilliant soldier, Hugh Capet was very modest. He felt he was no wiser than the other chiefs, even though he was king, so he was very kind to every one and ruled quietly but well.

His son, Robert, was like the weak son of Charlemagne. He was a good-natured fellow, caring little for war, but fond of singing, and fonder still of his books. One day while at mass, he saw a priest come in and steal the silver candlesticks on the altar. The king was foolish enough to cry out:—

“Friend Ogger, run for your life before you are

discovered. Here is money enough to help you on your way."

Another time when he had some poor men come in and eat at his feet he discovered, after they were gone, that one had cut a golden ornament from his robe. The queen was very angry, but Robert only laughed and said : —

" Poor fellow, he needed it more than I."

These stories show us that he was by no means the kind of man to make a wise king. He lacked the vigor and power to make France a great country. The chiefs were incessantly fighting one another, so that the homes of the peasants were constantly plundered and burned. Robert did not try to stop this petty warfare. Then as the year 1000 was approaching many people feared that the end of the world was coming. Many sold their lands or gave them away to the church. Some went on pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Many thought they saw strange sights in the heavens. All France was in confusion.

THE CRUSADES

It was customary for a man in those days, if he were in great danger, to vow that if God preserved him in safety, he would go on a pilgrimage to some holy shrine where lay the bones of a blessed saint.

The holiest shrine of all was at Jerusalem, — the Holy Sepulcher where Christ had been buried. It was a long way to go, for the pilgrims had to travel



Taking the Crusader's Vow

mostly afoot, or on mules, but still many men in those days were wont to take up the staff, and, putting on the cloak of a pilgrim, make their long and wearisome way to this sacred spot.

But one day the news reached Europe that the pagan Turks had captured the Holy City, so it was no longer safe for pilgrims to go there. Later, word came that the Turks were desecrating the holy shrine. The Pope was greatly troubled and

called a large meeting at Clermont in Auvergne. Thither Christians rushed from various countries. Many had to come from afar and pass through

strange lands whose language they could not speak, but if ever they wished to inquire the way they needed but to form the cross with their fingers, and old and young, rich and poor, knew whither they were bound.

At this great meeting at Clermont there was a pilgrim who had just returned from Jerusalem. He was a short, thin-faced little man, dressed in rough garments, but when he began to speak and the light came into his bead-like eyes, the crowd was breathless, and when he ceased speaking they cried :—

“ It is the will of God that we go to capture the Holy City from the Turks ! ”

Many rushed forward, on the spot, and had their shoulders marked with a cross, made of two strips of cloth, which was a sign that they promised to go to Jerusalem and fight against the infidels. Peter the Hermit, for that was the name of the enthusiastic pilgrim, traveled through the land, drawing crowds about him wherever he spoke, and gathering many followers. At length, under his leadership, the crowd of zealous pilgrims started to win back their great shrine, the Holy Sepulcher.

There were hundreds of men, women and children in this crusade. Peasants, workmen, priests and whole families started without arms and without provisions. The poor little children found the

journey very long and tiresome. Every time they saw the tall spires of a city in the distance, they turned anxiously to their fathers or mothers asking:

“Isn't that Jerusalem?”

Some of the farmers had hitched their oxen to carts, so their wives and children could ride, but most of the crusaders had to go afoot. Many there were who died, worn out by the hardships of the way, or from sickness. None of those who had started out so bravely ever reached the Holy City.

But the next year a grand army of crusaders set out, led by Godfrey of Bouillon, and although many perished on the way, a large number came safely to Jerusalem and started to attack the infidels. The Turks made a brave defense. From the tops of their walls they poured down a mixture of burning oil and sulphur upon the heads of the besiegers. Jerusalem was taken only after a siege of five weeks. The crusaders rushed into the Holy City and began to kill all the Turks there. It is said the horses were stained with blood up to their knees. Godfrey tried to restrain his people, but they paid no heed to his commands. Then he threw down his arms, and fell on his knees before the Holy Sepulcher bewailing the hard-heartedness of the crusaders who called themselves Christians. When they saw Godfrey's anguish they began to feel

ashamed of themselves. They dismounted, washed off the blood from their armor, climbed the hill of Calvary on foot, and knelt before the tomb where Christ had lain.

When the council was held to see who should be king of Jerusalem, Godfrey was chosen, but he refused to be crowned.

"I am unworthy to wear a crown of gold, when Christ wore a crown of thorns," he said.

This was the first great crusade in history.

THE FRENCH CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

ONE summer afternoon long ago, in these days of crusades, a little shepherd lad was sitting on the hillside watching his sheep. A tiny lamb had just wandered from the fold and the boy had chased it and brought it back safely to its mother. Hot and breathless from his long run, he threw himself down on the cool grass in the shade and shut his eyes. When he opened them again he found a stranger bending over him. He wore a long cloak about his shoulders, sandals laced across his bare feet, and carried a staff in his hand.

The shepherd boy sprang to his feet. He had heard about the crusades, but he had never before seen a real pilgrim.

“Good lad,” the old man at last spoke, “can you tell me where I can get a bite of food? I have come a long way and am faint with hunger.”

Stephen, for that was the shepherd boy’s name, opened his leathern wallet and drew forth a piece of dry bread and some cheese. “Take my supper,” he cried, “for I am not hungry. But tell me, have you really been on a crusade, and have you truly seen Jerusalem?”

The pilgrim sat down on the grass beside the boy, and ate the bread and cheese silently. But when he had finished he turned to Stephen.—Yes, he had been on a crusade, and he told the boy all about it. As he spoke of the Holy City and the fighting with the Turks, the boy’s eyes grew large and bright with excitement. The pilgrim then drew nearer and put his arm on Stephen’s shoulder.

“My lad,” he said slowly, “I am come here not to tell you of my life but of yours. You have been called to preach a children’s crusade. You shall gather the children of France together and lead them to Jerusalem. This is the will of God.”

Then picking up his staff he left a very much astonished little shepherd boy sitting on the hillside. But Stephen did not sit there long. He soon ran home to tell his bewildered parents the strange

story. The next morning he began to preach to the children in the village.

But Stephen soon decided to leave the little village and go to Paris. You will remember the church of Saint Denis, the patron saint of Paris. It was here, in this church, that Dagobert and all the French kings that came after him had been buried. Here, too, was kept the sacred oriflamme, the holy flag of the French realm. And here it was that the twelve year old Stephen, his shepherd's crook in his hand, and his wallet at his side, began preaching the Children's Crusade.

Never had there been such excitement among the children of any land. Other lads sprang up in other villages to preach the same Children's Crusade. Young nobles came from their castles, and peasant children from the hayfields to form in bands to march to Palestine. At their head went a youth carrying a flag made like the oriflamme, the symbol of Saint Denis. Vendôme was the gathering place selected by Stephen, and in June some fifteen hundred boys and girls were found there ready for the crusade. Many of their fathers and mothers, with tears in their eyes, begged the children to come back to their homes, but the children pointed to the red crosses on their shoulders, and replied, "God wills it."

So finally the day dawned when the crusade should start. Stephen rode at the head of the ranks in a chariot, with a canopy to keep off the sun. An escort of noble youths rode at his side to guard him, and to carry out his commands. But most of the children came afoot, carrying flags and singing hymns as they marched. It was a terrible crusade. The children were not used to the long days of tramping in the hot sun, and many hundred of them died along the way. They were journeying toward Marseilles where Stephen had seen in a vision that the Lord would open up a dry way for them across the sea. In vain they watched the blue water for this path to open. At length two merchants offered to take them in their ships. Great was the rejoicing now. "This was what the vision had meant," Stephen cried. God would protect them and bring them to the Holy Land.

Amid singing and flying of banners the children embarked in the seven vessels. The wind filled the white sails and thousands of French boys and girls waved farewell to their native land.

How little they dreamed that they were in reality saying farewell, never to return. A terrible storm arose and two of the vessels were wrecked off the coast of Italy and went down with all on board. The others sailed madly on, but not to Jerusalem.

The merchants who owned the ships were slave dealers. They bore the innocent children to the coast of Africa, and there sold them all into slavery. Not one came to the Holy Land. Not one returned to France. Did Stephen drown at sea or was he sold into slavery? No one knows. This was the sad story of the French Children's Crusade.

LOUIS THE YOUNG

THE French king, Louis VI, did not go on crusades. He took advantage of the fact that his powerful neighbors and nobles were away to establish peace and justice within his own kingdom. He put to death robbers and highwaymen, and aided the peasants until the people came to look upon him as their champion. So, slowly, the idea of kingship rose in the minds of the people, and the king became for them a great example of a brave, generous knight. Louis VI also strengthened his kingdom by marrying his son, afterwards Louis VII, to Eleanor of Aquitaine, the little daughter of one of his richest and strongest nobles. When the king returned to Paris after this wedding, he was taken ill and died, so the bride and groom found themselves king and queen.

This young monarch had been brought up by the

monks and he always cared more for his church than for his kingdom. Early in his reign, while he was besieging an enemy's tower, he found that his soldiers had burned down a church whither many women and children had fled for refuge. The cries of the suffocating people rang in the ears of the king night and day, until he finally decided that he would make atonement for this awful deed by a crusade. When Louis' minister, Suger, a very wise man, heard that the king had made this vow, he was much troubled, for he knew that Louis was sadly needed at home in his own kingdom. He might have persuaded Louis to give up the crusade had not a zealous monk, Saint Bernard, just at this time been fired with the desire to go to the Holy Land. This monk was even more eloquent than Peter the Hermit. He not only aroused the people in his own land, but also journeyed throughout Germany where the people could not understand his words, but were kindled with enthusiasm from the light in his eyes and the ring in his voice. The king, in spite of all Suger's wise words, could not resist the magnetic Saint Bernard. On Easter Day, 1146, the monk preached before the king and queen, and many of their knights and nobles. When the words died from his lips the whole assembly sprang to their feet crying: "Crosses!

Crosses!" Some of them even tore strips from their clothes and laid them crossed on their shoulders.

So another great crusade was started. Its story is full of sadness and disappointments. The queen was not content to go without carrying with her all her fine robes, her waiting women, her jesters, and her minstrels. It was a queer looking band of pilgrims that came from the palace to join the crusades. But the queen and her company did not stay long with them. She wearied of the tedious journey and declared that she could not love Louis, since he was more a monk than a king. So she left him and later the Pope freed her from her marriage.

Meanwhile Louis and his army of men, women, and children, who were footsore and sick, dragged themselves slowly across the land. At length they came to a seaport where some vessels were waiting to carry them to Jerusalem. But, alas! there were not ships enough. Louis and his nobles set sail, leaving the rest to come as best they might. Thus the king and his handful of followers were the only ones who reached the Holy City. And what could they do when they got there? Nothing but offer prayers, for their army was too small to fight. Louis came back a degraded, miserable old man, only to find new troubles awaiting him at home. His

former queen had married Henry II, King of England, and she was only too glad to stir up quarrels between him and Louis.

When Louis the Young died, he might better have been called Louis the Old, for he had reigned fifty years. He left one little son whom he had named Philip, the Gift of God.

PHILIP, THE GIFT OF GOD

ONE day, soon after Philip Augustus, the fifteen year old king began to reign, his nobles found him sitting in his garden gazing straight before him. When they asked him of what he was thinking so deeply, he replied at once: —

“I am wondering if I can ever raise France to the height she attained in the days of Charlemagne.”

This was his great ambition during all his reign. But he did not merely *think* about it; he went to work first to make the city of Paris more beautiful and more healthful. He widened and paved the streets, which before had been mere gutters. He founded hospitals, and began to build the cathedral of Notre Dame.

He carried on wars, too, with enemies who threatened to take away parts of his kingdom, but so suc-

cessfully did these wars end that Philip's kingdom was increased thereby.

Then came the word, spreading like wildfire throughout Europe, that Jerusalem was again attacked by infidels. A third crusade was started. The German emperor went with his army. Richard, King of England, called the "Lion-hearted," joined him, and persuaded Philip to raise an army and go too. But as they traveled on from day to day, Philip's thoughts were not on the Holy City, but on his own city of Paris and his beloved France. He longed to go back to her. At last the opportunity came. He and Richard had a quarrel and refused to go further together, so Philip himself left the crusade and came home. His army, however, marched on with the rest and fought bravely for Jerusalem. Philip disliked Richard and the English so heartily that he probably would have made war upon England, had not the Pope made him promise that he would not attack that country while her king was on a crusade. Philip, however, did all that he could to prevent Richard from returning. He made friends with John, Richard's brother, who was regent of England while Richard was away, and tried his best to make him hate his brother. Later, when Richard was taken prisoner by the Duke of Austria, Philip even sent money to the duke to

keep Richard in prison longer. But the English people ransomed their king and he came home to wage war with Philip.

It was not a long war, for Richard was shot by an arrow while besieging a French castle. John, Philip's friend, now became king of England. But Philip no longer held him as friend. He knew John was weak and cowardly and so he continued the war, hoping to win back the provinces that Eleanor had given England when she forsook Louis the Young and married the English monarch. Philip's hopes were fulfilled. John was no fighter, so Normandy, Brittany, Maine, and parts of Anjou and Touraine, once more became French provinces.

Still Philip was not content with the size of his country. This time he went to war with Flanders and the German emperor, who had been troubling his border lands. The great battle in this war took place at Bouvines.

Before this battle Philip drew up his whole army and had the priests say mass. Then, when Philip rose from his knees, he took the crown from his head and placing it on the altar said:—

“My counts and my barons, if you believe this crown would be better worn by any of you, I will gladly give it up.”

Shout after shout went up for the noble Philip

Augustus, King of France, and the troops went into battle, ready to win or die for him. The victory that day was for the French and their brave leader. The German emperor fled from the field, leaving behind his beautiful war chariot, and the troops of the enemy were all put to rout.

Philip's return to Paris was one long triumphal march. From all the churches as he passed came the chants of the priests giving praises to God for the great victory of the French ; from the towers sounded the bells, and the streets reëchoed with the beating of drums. The houses were hung with tapestries and banners. The roads were strewn with green branches and fresh flowers, and the people crowded to the roadside to see their king pass by. At Paris a great number of priests and scholars came to meet him, singing songs of thanksgiving. Never was Philip prouder or happier than as he moved along, at the head of the procession, through the beautiful streets of his capital. The joyful crowd passed on to the new cathedral of Notre Dame, where a Te Deum celebrated Philip's victory, for which all France had fought and was now rejoicing.

Thus, while Philip never increased his kingdom to the size of Charlemagne's, still he enlarged it, built many schools and public buildings, beautified Paris, and won the love of his people.

SAINT LOUIS (IX)

THE son of Philip Augustus died after a very short reign, so Philip's little grandson Louis, a lad of only eleven years, became king. But as he was too young to reign, his mother, Blanche of Castile, a very beautiful and wise woman, ruled for him.

"Beware, my boy," she often said to the small king, "of ever doing or saying anything that you would be ashamed to have the whole world know."

She often called together Louis, his three small brothers, and their little playmates, and taught them herself. She told them many stories. Some were about the good men and women in the Bible; some about the brave knights that had fought for Jerusalem, and then again stories about the great kings who had governed their own dear France. So Louis grew up filled with the desire to be as good and noble a king as Charlemagne, and his own grandfather, Philip Augustus.

Soon after he began to reign himself, Louis was taken very seriously ill. The whole land was thrown into mourning, for they feared that their good young king would die. But finally Louis opened his eyes, and asked for the cross. He was so weak that he could not do more than hold it in his trembling



Louis IX giving Alms

fingers, but his mother understood. The tears came into her eyes, for she knew that Louis had made a vow that he would go to the Holy Land if God gave him his health again.

Louis did get well and remembered his vow. But he did not wish to go on the crusade alone. Finally he made his three brothers promise to go with him. Still he was not satisfied.

At length he devised a scheme to get his nobles to accompany him on the crusade. It was customary on Christmas Day for the king to give each of his courtiers a new cloak. So, the night before Christmas, Louis bade them all come to early mass the next day, and receive their gift then. Very early Christmas morning, while it was still dark, the king led the way into the dimly lighted church. Following came all the courtiers, and each one as he entered had a new cloak thrown over his shoulders. As the mass continued, the day began to break. The first rays of the sun that streamed in through the stained glass windows on the kneeling courtiers, showed them that each one had a red cross sewn on the sleeve of his new cloak. At first they were angry, but their love for their king was so great that many of them promised to go with him.

Louis and his army sailed for Egypt, for the Sultan of that country was now master over Jerusalem.

At first the French were victorious, but soon they found that they had something worse than the armies to fight. The pestilence, a terrible disease common in warm countries, broke out among the French troops. They could not fight longer, so many were taken prisoners, and many died of the sickness. Louis went around the camp himself, caring for the sick with his own hands. His calm, sweet face brought cheer wherever he went, and bound his men to him more strongly every day. In the midst of these disasters, he himself was taken prisoner. When France heard of this, hundreds of poor serfs and peasants started afoot to go and free their king. But long before they reached Egypt, the wiser people in France had ransomed Louis by raising a large sum of money. They hoped that their king would now come back to them, but Louis thought he had done so little that he was ashamed to face his people. He went on to Palestine with the poor remnant of his army, and for four years was busy rebuilding the walls of cities that the Turks had destroyed, and freeing many Christians who had been made slaves. At last the news of his mother's death called him home. He had made his crusade, but had refused to look upon Jerusalem, for he thought that a Christian king was not worthy to approach the city unless he could

deliver it from the enemies of God. On his return to Paris, he caused the beautiful little Sainte-Chapelle to be erected as a shrine to contain the sacred relics he had brought back with him from the Holy Land.

For sixteen years, now, Louis stayed at home, ruling wisely and justly. He could not bear to have the poorest of his subjects treated with injustice, so he founded many courts. There was a large oak tree near his palace at Vincennes, and in the summer he was often found sitting beneath this tree, judging the cases of any who wished to come to him. He also gave back many lands that former kings had taken unjustly. Justice was Louis' motto. He never made war with England and Germany, but tried instead to win the affection of their rulers. So largely did he succeed in this that foreign kings often sent their disputes to him to settle. Is it to be wondered at that the French loved their noble king and called him Saint Louis?

But although Louis remained quietly at home all these years, he had always worn the cross on his shoulder. His nobles knew that this meant that he thought his vow unfulfilled. At last he started on another crusade. The history of this sad journey reads very much like that of Saint Louis' first crusade. The awful pestilence came again upon the

army, this time attacking Louis himself. He knew he was dying, so he called his son Philip to his bedside and said to him: —

“My son, above all things love God, and try to please him. Be good to the poor. Be just to every one. Never neglect your people. Farewell, my child.”

So ended the crusades, with the death of the last royal crusader.

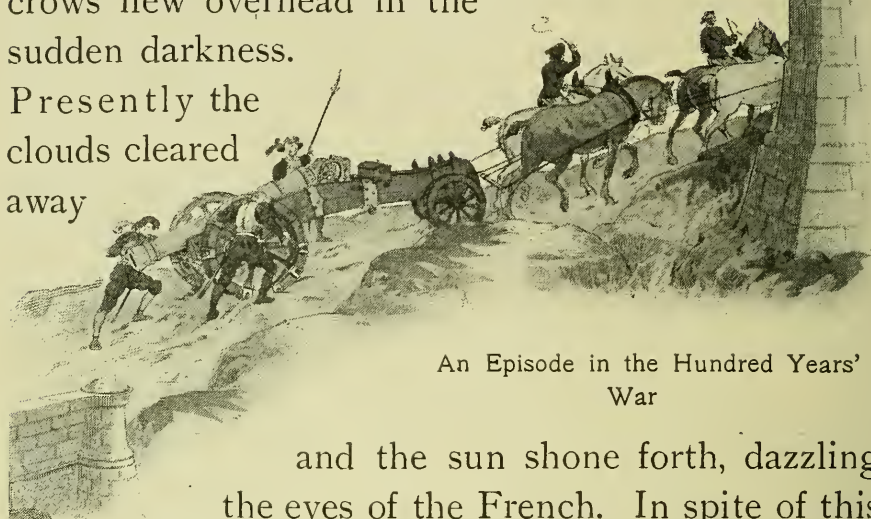
THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

THE kings that ruled after Saint Louis were neither good nor wise, but they married rich princesses and were successful in war, so they made France larger and stronger. Suddenly there was great alarm in the land. The king had died, leaving only daughters, and there was a law in France that no woman should govern the kingdom. So the nobles gave the crown to a cousin of the late king, Philip VI of Valois. But the king of England, whose mother was a French princess, began to call himself “King of France,” and this led to a terrible war that lasted for a hundred years.

The first great battle was at Crécy. There, on a grassy hillside, the English had encamped, and Philip, when he heard of it, came marching hurriedly

against them. As the French were approaching the English, a fearful storm arose. The sun was eclipsed. Great flocks of crows flew overhead in the sudden darkness.

Presently the clouds cleared away



An Episode in the Hundred Years' War

and the sun shone forth, dazzling the eyes of the French. In spite of this

Philip cried out:—

“Let the Genoese archers go first and begin the battle, in the name of God and Saint Denis!”

But the Genoese were tired from their long march, and their bowstrings were so wet that they could not stretch them. Meanwhile the English bowmen came forward, fresh from their encampment and with dry strings, for they had hidden them in their helmets during the storm. They let their arrows fly so thick and fast that they fell upon the French like hail. The Genoese, dismayed, cut their strings and fled. Philip, in anger, ordered his army to advance and slay these cowards. Great was the confusion.

The end was a terrible defeat for the French. The king was hurried off the field in the night and rode with five men back to the castle, where he woke the warden with the loud cry:—

“Open to the unfortunate king of France!”



Siege of Calais

Edward III, the English king, next led his army against a French coast town, Calais. The people of Calais shut their gates and refused to surrender. The English king then began a siege, and soon a little village grew up all around the wall of Calais,

where Edward and his army lived for ten long months. The food in the city grew less and less every day. The people hoped and prayed that their king would come and save them, but Philip had no army left after the battle of Crécy. At last the men of Calais sent word to Edward that they would surrender.

“Then,” said the English monarch, “let six of the chief citizens come to my camp, wearing halters round their necks, and bringing me the keys of the castle and the town.”

Six of the brave men of the besieged city came forth as the king had ordered and, kneeling before him, begged for the lives of the people of Calais. But Edward was very angry because they had resisted him so long, and he swore that every one of them should be put to death. At this, even Edward’s nobles, who were standing around, felt some pity for the miserable men of Calais, who were thin and pale as ghosts, and their faces drawn with sorrow, as they listened to the king. Edward alone sat unmoved, even after the six men had begged him:—

“Noble king, for God’s sake refrain! You are called a generous sovereign. Forbear from doing this thing which shall blemish your renown.”

The king, angrier than ever, called loudly for

the hangman. Then the queen sprang from her seat beside the king, and knelt with the men. There were tears streaming down her face, as she pleaded in her soft voice:—

“Gentle sir! Since I crossed the sea in great peril to come to you, I have asked for nothing. Now I beseech you, for the love of me, that you will have mercy on these men of Calais!”

The king waited a moment, deep in thought, and then replied:—

“Dame, I would you had been in another place than here to-day. Your request is such that I cannot deny it. Take them and do with them as is your pleasure.”

So the queen ordered them to come to her chamber, gave them new clothes, set before them food and drink, and when they had eaten told them that they were free.

About this time a terrible plague, called the Black Death, broke out in France. Five hundred people a day died in the hospitals of Paris. A truce was now signed between England and France. Edward, glad of the peace, went home, counting himself the victor, and still calling himself the king of France. Philip died soon after, having had a reign that was nothing but one long war.

KING JOHN, THE ROYAL HOSTAGE

WAR with England was resumed, however, when John, Philip's son, came to the throne. John thought himself a brave, noble knight, so he gathered an army about him and set forth to attack the English king, his son the Prince of Wales, and their soldiers, who were all encamped upon a rough hillside near Poitiers. Here he could easily have captured them all by besieging them, for no retreat was possible. But John wished for the glory of a battle. He drew up his line and advanced upon the enemy. The hill proved a defence for the English, and they had a noble leader in the fearless Black Prince, so called from the color of his armor.

From the first the English were successful and at the close of the battle they even took John prisoner.

"Take me to my cousin, the prince," he requested, and his captor led him to the commander's tent. The Black Prince treated the conquered king royally. At dinner he himself served John. But this could not make the French forget the bitterness of their defeat.

When the English ships bore their great French prisoner to London, John's son, Charles, became regent. He was called Charles the Wise, but he was

really very foolish. He had always been a sickly boy, and indulgence had made him cowardly and fond of pleasure. He loved ease, wealth, and comfort, and knew little how to help a land laid waste by war. The country was full of bands of lawless men, called free lances, who lived by stealing and plundering. Many of the inhabitants were poor and homeless, and worn out by this continued warfare.

Finally King John, who was still a prisoner in England, came to terms of peace with Edward, but the treaty gave so much French land to England that Charles the Regent refused to agree to it. He put the matter before some of his nobles and they, too, were unwilling to make peace at such a price.

When this answer came to King Edward, he was very angry and at once began to prepare for war. He sent over armies into France, and money to hire the free lances. Charles could not raise an army because he had no men. All he could do was to strengthen the fortifications of the land and wait for the English to tire themselves out. He himself stayed quietly at Paris.

King Edward marched through the land finding little food for his men and no French army to do battle with. He besieged the large city of Rheims, where he had hoped to be crowned king of France,

but the city held out, and Edward was obliged to march away unsuccessful. Soon after this he again treated for peace, and, although the French lost much of their finest land, the news that peace



French Soldier in the Hundred Years'
War

was signed with England caused great joy in Paris. Edward refused to free John, however, until a large sum of ransom money was paid. The French people were too poor to raise the required amount, but, finally, an Italian lord promised to pay the money in return for the hand of John's daughter in marriage with his son. The bargain was made, and John again became king of France.

But, although the war was ended, the free companies still wandered through the land terrifying the people. John tried in vain to stop them. He was just on the point of starting a crusade, hoping

to take these restless fighters along with him, when he heard that his second son, Louis, left as a hostage with the English, had run away, and refused to return. John felt it his duty as king to take the place of the prince. His friends entreated him to remain in France, but John replied nobly: —

“Where should honor find a resting-place, if not in the heart of a king?”

So he again gave into Charles' hands the worries and troubles of his kingdom and returned a state prisoner to the English court. There he was hospitably received by the English monarch and kindly treated during the short time he lived.

When he died, Charles the Regent became Charles V of France.

BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN, THE DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

WHEN Charles the Regent heard that he was king of France, he realized that he must now become a man of action. He straightened up, threw back his shoulders and resolved to do his best for his country. He met the troubles John had bequeathed him face to face. War with the Black Prince of England was pending. The free lances were increasing daily and riding recklessly through

the land. Many a king would have thought that he himself, whether a good soldier or not, should stand at the head of his army. Charles was wiser. He knew he was sickly and had no knowledge of warfare, so he set out to find the ablest soldier in the land to be his general. He found this man among the free lances, a brave knight, Bertrand du Guesclin.

Before Du Guesclin was born his mother had a very singular dream. She dreamed that she held in her lap a jewel box in which there was on one side a big piece of rough rock and on the other three sparkling diamonds, three green emeralds and three cream white pearls. She tried again and again to take out the rough stone and throw it away, lest it injure the other jewels. But try as she might she could never get it out of the case. Then she began to polish it. Great was her surprise to see how bright it became. At last she saw that it was a diamond, the largest and most brilliant gem in the box. In the morning she remembered the dream and wondered what it meant, but no one could tell her.

Soon afterwards her oldest boy, Bertrand, was born, and after him many other brothers and sisters. Of them all, Bertrand, with his red hair and dark skin, was the homeliest and most quarrelsome. One day when he had been teasing his brothers and

sisters, his mother would not let him come to the table, but made him eat his dinner in a corner by himself. The sulky Bertrand grew angrier and angrier. Finally he jumped from his chair and, running to the table, sprang upon it, breaking gob-



The Disobedient Bertrand

lets and plates and spilling the soup and the wine. "I won't sit in the corner by myself. I want to sit here," he cried, dancing and jumping about the table.

His mother wept and wrung her hands. What should she do with this boy? At last she went to a nun, Sister Martha, and told her about her willful

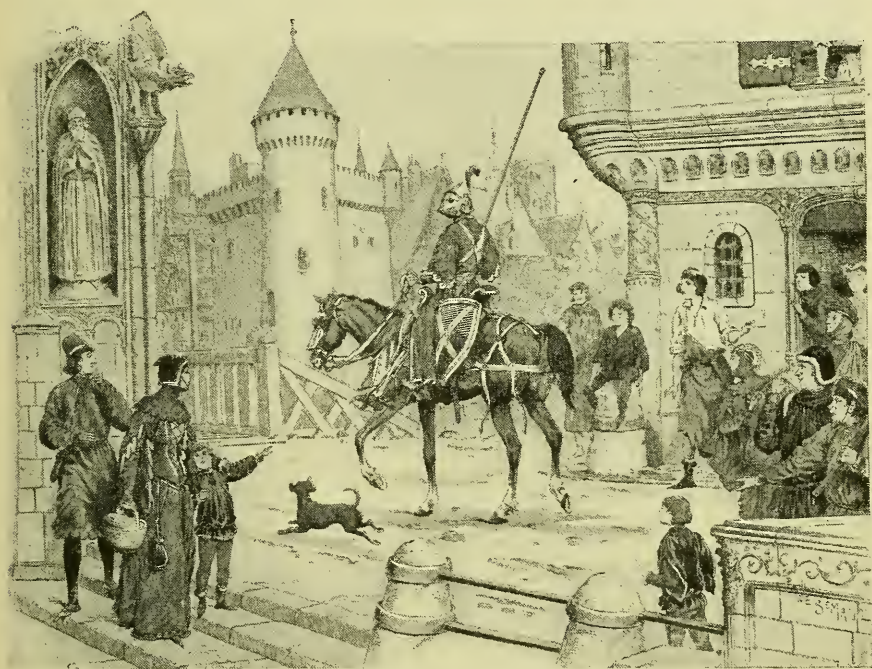
son. Sister Martha came to see the lad, and asked him to show her his hand. Then she looked straight into Bertrand's eyes, and said slowly: "You will grow up to be a wise and good man. No one in the kingdom of France shall be more honored than you."

Then Bertrand's mother thought of her dream and told it to Sister Martha. "Those jewels," replied the nun, "are your children, your nine sons and daughters. And," she continued, laying her hand on Bertrand's shoulder, "this is the rough stone, that when it is polished shall shine most of all."

From this time Bertrand decided to learn to be a soldier, that he might some day fight for France. He formed a troop of his playmates, and together they besieged all the old houses in the town. He learned to read, too, for he wanted to know the stories of Cæsar, of Clovis and of Charlemagne. He learned to draw a bow, to break a lance, to use a sword, and to ride the most fiery horse. He knew no fear, and his reckless deeds made him the dread of the whole neighborhood.

One day Bertrand heard an exciting piece of news. A great wedding was to take place in the town and afterwards a tournament. At last he should be able to see a real combat. But keen disappointment was in store for him. His father rode forth to the jousts

with all his horsemen, leaving Bertrand at home. "The boy is still too young," he had said. His eyes swimming with tears, Bertrand wandered out into the empty stable. One bony old horse was left in his stall. The boy dashed away his tears,



Bertrand rides off to the Tournament

flung a bridle about the horse's neck, and put on some rusty armor. Amid the jeers of the villagers and the barking of the dogs he rode off to the tournament.

As he drew near the field he pulled his visor down over his face so that no one should recognize him. For a long time he sat astride his old horse,



The Knights in the Lists

watching the knights on the field. But at length he could sit still no longer. The flashing swords set his blood on fire. There was a knight beside him riding a noble charger, and Bertrand begged him to let him borrow the horse that he might enter the lists. The earnestness of the boy's voice won the knight's heart, and a few moments later Bertrand was charging down the field.

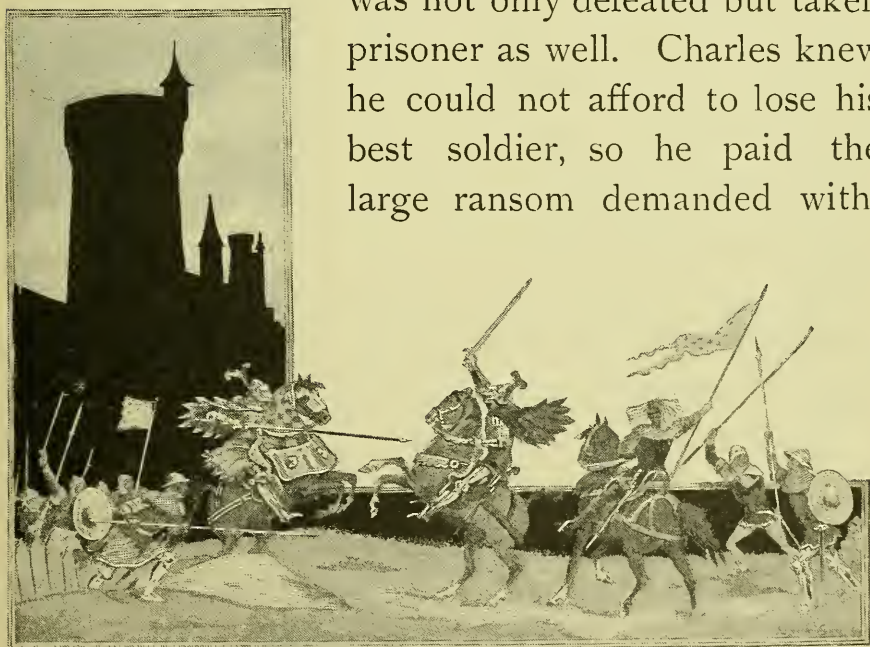
When the tournament ended the heralds raised their horns and proclaimed that an unknown knight had conquered twelve times. The crowds gathered about the unknown victor and besought him to raise his visor. It was little Bertrand du Guesclin.

From that day Bertrand du Guesclin was a soldier. He joined the free lances, and in their ranks the king found him when he wanted a brave leader for his army.

DU GUESCLIN FIGHTS FOR FRANCE

DU GUESCLIN was very proud to be the friend of the king and the leader of the French army. He went bravely into battle, and fought nobly and well. But the English had an even better general. The first time Du Guesclin met the English army he

was not only defeated but taken prisoner as well. Charles knew he could not afford to lose his best soldier, so he paid the large ransom demanded with-



The Free Lances

out a word of complaint. The war with England was declared over.

Charles saw that now his kingdom would be harassed by the free lances. He called Du Guesclin to him and together they formed a plan to rid the country of these wild companies. Du Guesclin was to lead them all into Spain to take part in a civil war that was raging there. The free lances knew Du Guesclin and were delighted to fight in his army. Charles must have drawn a long sigh of relief when the sound of drums and the tramping of feet died away in the distance, and he knew that the free lances were marching out of France.

Success seemed truly to court Du Guesclin, until one fatal day the English came to help the defeated party in Spain. Du Guesclin met them and was again taken prisoner. After he had been in captivity some time, he was taken before the Black Prince.

"I have decided," said the prince to Du Guesclin, "not to release you until the war is over."

Du Guesclin bowed his head. "I am honored," he replied. "I see now how greatly the English fear me."

The face of the prince darkened, as he retorted, "I will set you free at once, without ransom, for I esteem you, Du Guesclin, but I do not fear you."

“And I,” answered Du Guesclin, no less proudly, “will take my freedom, but not without paying a ransom of ten thousand francs.”

“How will you, a soldier knight, raise such a sum of money?” asked the prince, amazed.

“The king of France will give me money,” Du Guesclin made reply. “There are a hundred lords in Brittany who will gladly sell their land to free me. And if that is not sufficient, every daughter of France will spin a distaff full for my ransom.”

So Du Guesclin was set free.

From this moment success was with the French. The English soldiers sickened in the hot climate of Spain. The Spanish for whom they had fought refused to pay them. The Black Prince fell ill. Charles saw that the moment had come to drive the English from his land. Du Guesclin once more set out against them. But this time he knew better than to risk an open battle. He simply starved the English out. The Black Prince was so ill that at the beginning of the war he was carried in a litter. Before the war closed he had to return to England, where he died.

On and on the French advanced, driving the English before them, or starving them out of their strongholds. While Du Guesclin was laying siege to one of these castles he fell ill of a fever and died.

The English captain had promised to surrender on a certain day, if no help came. The day came and he scanned the horizon in vain. At night he rode out to the French lines and said that he surrendered to Du Guesclin.

“Du Guesclin is dead,” was the reply.

When the English captain heard this he asked to be taken to the tent of the dead general. He entered reverently, fell on his knees before the bier and laid the keys of his castle on Du Guesclin’s breast.

“I surrender to Du Guesclin,” he repeated.

Charles V was so grieved when he heard of the death of his great general that he had him buried in the Abbey of Saint Denis, among the kings of France. He chose another general, who carried on the war until the English were forced to give up all that they claimed in France, except a few towns. Soon after Charles V died.

He had ruled quietly but well, and fully deserved his title, “Charles the Wise.”

CHARLES VI, THE MAD KING

CHARLES V, on his death bed, called his brothers to him and bade them take care of the young Prince Charles, who was about to succeed him. "He is only a boy of twelve," he said, "and there is great need that he have good training and teaching." But as soon as the king died, the brothers all fell to quarreling and paid little attention to the boy who was crowned Charles VI.

The four uncles were all greedy for power and riches. They stole the jewels and the silver services of the late king. Then, not content with this, they refused to pay the soldiers and levied high taxes on the people. Riots broke out in Paris, and foreign wars abroad.

In the meantime, Charles VI, who had been left to grow up by himself, cared for little else besides hunting and amusing himself. One day as he was riding with his courtiers through the forest, an old man in rags, and with long streaming hair, rushed out of a thicket crying: "King, go no further, thou art betrayed." The king rode on, but with a white and startled face. Suddenly a little page riding behind him fell asleep, and dropped his lance forward. As it fell, it struck the helmet of the rider in front. Charles hearing the clash of steel

thought he was betrayed. Mad with fear, he turned upon his own nobles and killed four of them. As he fought, he grew so wild that his attendants finally had to use force to restrain him, and they led him back to Paris bound hand and foot.

In time he recovered his reason, but no one could tell when the fit of madness would come again. Charles VI was fond of war, and collected an army and fleet to attack England. While he was busy over his preparations, however, the English ships sailed across the channel and destroyed the French fleet as it rode at anchor.

When news reached France that England was now preparing to invade their land, the son of the mad king laughed. He bought a set of tennis balls and sent them to Henry V of England, with the message that he was a madcap prince, and these balls were his fitting playthings. Henry V then made reply that he hoped to return each and every ball from the mouth of a cannon aimed at Paris.

At Agincourt, French and English drew up for a mighty battle. The French forces were five times as large as the English, and they rode into battle confident of victory. But so thick and fast flew the English arrows that the French found it impossible to advance. The battle ended by a terrible French defeat. Ten thousand of the bravest princes and

nobles in the land lay dead on the field that night. The Dauphin escaped from the fight but died soon afterwards; and the king was mad, shut up in his palace. Truly, as an old monk wrote: "These were evil days for France."

Finally a treaty was made with England. It was agreed that Henry V should marry Katherine, the daughter of Charles VI, who should bring to Henry, as her dowry, all the French provinces that had once belonged to the English kings, and that at the death of Charles, Henry should become king of France as well as England. Henry rode in state to Paris and was married with great pomp in Notre Dame to the French princess. He was very kind to King Charles, and the king loved him more than he did his own sons. When the following winter news was brought him that Henry was dead, he wept and wrung his hands, crying: "Oh, my good son Henry!"

But a few weeks later, Charles himself died, and his body was carried to Saint Denis. The people mourned for him with true sorrow. He had always been kind and good whenever his madness left him, and he came to be known as "Charles the Well-beloved." "Ah, dear king," they mourned, "never shall we have any as good as thou wert; since thou dost leave us we shall have nothing but wars and sorrows." And the people spoke rightly.



Herald

The herald's voice proclaimed in the streets: "The king is dead. Long live Henry VI, King of France and England." But Henry VI was only a baby, and long before he grew to be a man, France had passed forever out of the hands of the English.

THE MAID OF ORLEANS

IN the midst of these terrible war days, there was born in the little

village of Domrémy a peasant girl, named Jeanne d'Arc. When she grew older she used to tend her father's sheep, and as she sat on the hillside, watching them day by day, she often looked out over the ruined houses and blackened fields and wondered if the English would ever come again to frighten her people and burn their peaceful homes. Her father, too, feared the same, and so taught his little daughter to ride a horse and to use simple weapons.

Later she heard that the dreaded English were back in France, not in her own village, but besieging the brave town of Orleans. News came that the Dauphin, who was now governing France, dared not go to Rheims to be crowned, because the English troops held the place. One day as Jeanne sat musing over all these rumors, wishing that she were a man so that she might go and fight for her country, she saw a vision and heard voices bidding her leave her home and deliver the Dauphin from his enemies, so that he might be crowned king. So loudly and so plainly did she hear these voices that she felt she must go to the French court at once. She was so poor that she thought at first that she must go afoot, but some kind neighbors gave her a horse. Then she put on men's clothing, instead of her coarse red dress, cut off her long black hair and rode bravely off alone.

The journey was long and perilous, for the country was still full of robbers and free lances, but when it was over she found that her troubles had only begun. The nobles met her strange story with laughter and scorn, and refused to let her see the king. But finally her sweetness and gentle manner prevailed, and she was led into the presence of her sovereign. The story runs that the king, to test her, had put on the simple robe of a courtier, and

stood among the rest of the nobles when Jeanne entered. But Jeanne went to him, without hesitation, saluted and said:—

“In God’s name, it is you, sire, and none other.”

There she stood, a simple shepherd lass; who could neither read nor write, before a roomful of men of noble birth, but she was not afraid, for she brought with her the faith that she was to save France. Gradually her soft voice, ringing with enthusiasm and loyalty, aroused the king and his lords, and he granted Jeanne her request—she was to go and relieve Orleans.

He gave her a big horse and pure white armor, and she herself sent for a sword having five crosses on the blade, that she had seen in a dream lying behind an altar in a certain church.

But at Orleans the people who were defending the city mistrusted her. They tried to hide their plans from her and make a secret attack in the night on the enemy. But the shouts of war woke her from her sleep. She hastily called for her horse and galloped into the midst of the fight. The soldiers cheered her wildly and now even the unwilling captains were forced to listen to her. In the days that followed, Jeanne, though twice wounded, was always at the front, urging on the French and terrifying the English, who took her for a witch. She



Jeanne d'Arc on Horseback

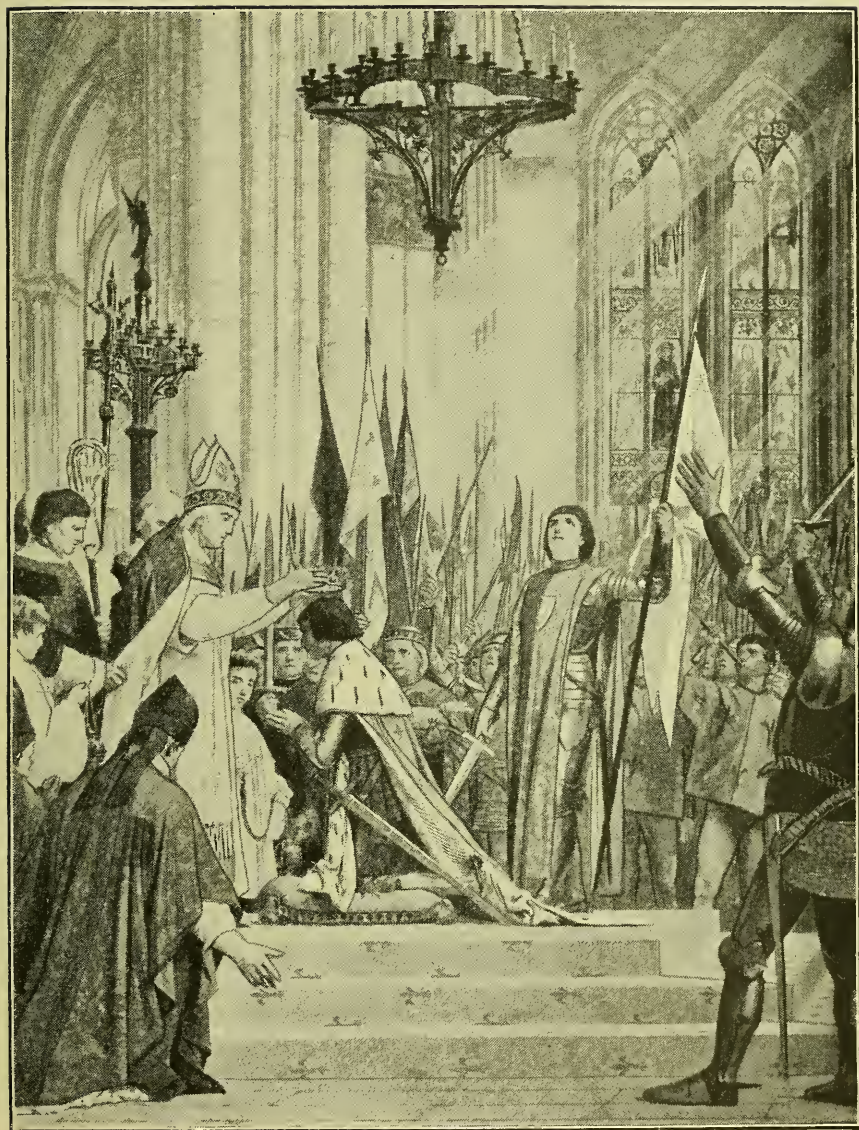
entered Orleans on Friday, and a week from the following Sunday the English had turned their backs forever on the city.

Jeanne did not linger to enjoy her triumph. Amid the tears of joy and the cheering of the people, she rode out of the city the next day to do the rest of her task,—to crown the Dauphin king of France. From far and near people came to see her, and a large army sprang up around her and the king, eager to march toward Rheims. Still the court delayed, for the nobles were jealous of Jeanne's glory; but she was firm in her faith and the people were with her.

The French first attacked the English who were holding Troyes. After a six days' siege the king was discouraged, for the food was growing very scarce, but Jeanne begged him to hold out two days longer. When he agreed, she mounted her horse and led the attack against the town. The English, in terror, opened their gates before the assault began. Thus the last difficulty was surmounted and the army marched safely to Rheims. Here the king was crowned in the big cathedral, the brave, young peasant girl standing by his side.

Jeanne was now ready to go back to her father and mother, and the tending of her sheep, but the voices still called her to drive the English from the land. She stayed with the king and army, trying to hasten an attack on the English. But the indolent king, listening to idle tales from his jealous nobles, forgot all Jeanne had done for him and France, and began to believe that she was a witch. At last, in a battle with the English, Jeanne was captured and the king did not seek to ransom her. The English believed her to be a witch and tried her for sorcery. She was condemned to be burned at the stake. Thus she died for the country she so dearly loved.

The Hundred Years' War lingered on for many years. At length, in 1453, it came to an end, as the



Coronation of Charles VII

king of neither country was fond of war, and the people had long since wearied of it. Soon France and England forgot their bitter hostility in trying to solve the many problems that confronted them in their own affairs.

LOUIS XI, THE SUPERSTITIOUS KING

WHEN the people of France heard of the cruel death of Jeanne d'Arc, they rallied bravely round their captains, and drove the hated English out of France.

Then the king, Charles VII, whom Jeanne had crowned, showed himself worthy of her hopes. He reorganized his country and army so skillfully that the king of England, who had possessed more than one half of France, was able to keep only one stronghold — the seaport of Calais. Louis, the king's eldest son, was born and grew up in the midst of these days. At the age of thirteen he had been married to a little Scotch princess, Margaret, one year younger than himself. But he was restless at court, and soon tired of his young bride, so his father sent him to govern a province. At first he enjoyed the work and endeavored to make his province the finest in the land, but before long he became restless again. He wanted to govern Normandy, a

larger province. His father refused to allow him. Then Louis began to tax the people of his province until they complained to the king. More than this, Louis displeased his father by marrying again against Charles' wishes, his poor little Scotch bride having died.

Charles sent for Louis to come back to court. Louis did not like his father's friends, and refused to come. Charles cut down Louis' allowance, and at last sent an army against him. The Dauphin was now really alarmed. He had no soldiers to resist the king's army. There was but one thing to do — to seek safety in flight. This Louis did. He escaped to Brussels where the Duke of Burgundy took the penniless prince in and gave him a home and a pension. Louis' wife, Charlotte, who was so poor that she had only one torn dress to wear, joined her husband here; and here, in exile, their first little son was born. When the French king, who felt himself growing feebler day by day, heard of the birth of his grandson, he sent word to Louis to come back and be forgiven. But Louis had no love in his heart for his father. He refused to go. Madness came over the old king. He believed his son was sending him poisoned food, so he refused to eat, and soon died.

A messenger came galloping to Louis to tell him

he was now king. Louis set out at once for France, begging Duke Philip to ride with him, for he did not know how he would be received by the French people. But he soon saw he had nothing to fear. His people flocked over the border to welcome him, and he was crowned at once Louis XI of France.

Louis looked little like a monarch. He was short, had small eyes, a long nose, and a cruel mouth. He wore his hair long, hanging over his shoulders, and pulled down over his head an old felt hat with leaden images of the saints standing around the crown. He liked, too, to dress like the commoners, instead of wearing velvets and satins.

Before Louis had ruled many years, Philip of Burgundy died and his son Charles inherited all his dukedom. Charles was very greedy for wealth and power. He and Louis now forgot their old friendship, when Charles' father had taken into his home the fugitive prince, and they began a long war with each other. After the war had continued many years, Charles sent for Louis to come to his palace and talk over terms of peace, promising him safety while there. Louis came. While he was there, word came that Charles' city of Liège had revolted in favor of Louis. The duke, much enraged, imprisoned his royal guest. Louis, fearing that Charles would kill him, resolved to make peace

at any price. He gained his freedom by promising to march with Charles against Liège. So they went forth together and the disgraced Louis had to stand by and see the loyal city laid in ruins. After this Charles let the king go back to Paris.

Here he did much for the city. He lowered the taxes and encouraged trade. He did not care much for books himself, but when he heard that the printing press had been invented, he had one brought to Paris. Up to this time books had all been written by hand, and had cost so much that only the very wealthy could afford to own them. One woman gave a whole flock of sheep for a single book.

In the meantime, Charles of Burgundy, called rightly Charles the Bold, had gone to Switzerland to try and join that land to his, but the Swiss fought too bravely to be conquered. Suddenly news came to Louis that Charles was dead. He had fallen in the midst of the fight. With this great rival gone, Louis felt new strength in his veins. One by one he suppressed all his nobles, making them acknowledge him their lord and master. But he was growing into a sour, suspicious and gloomy old man.

During his last years he shut himself up in a castle, round which ran a moat guarded with a trellis of iron bars. At eight in the morning the

drawbridge fell, and the sentinels marched over and stood on guard as before a fortress. No stranger might enter except through a little wicket gate, by the king's special permission. Here the self-imprisoned king spent the last years of his life, walking up and down the long galleries, or stealing out into a tiny court for a breath of fresh air. To let the world know he was still alive, he sent to all the foreign lands for dogs or fine horses. No one was allowed to speak the word *death*. At last he grew so feeble that he knew he must be dying. He sent for his son Charles and begged him to be a good and wise ruler.

"Give the country a rest from war," were almost the last words that fell from his lips. He had been very cowardly the latter part of his life, but he died bravely.

FRANCE AND BAYARD

ALTHOUGH Louis XI had cared little for his son, now Charles VIII, he had always loved his eldest daughter Anne dearly, so he gave to her and to her husband the charge of the little thirteen year old king. We do not know much about this good Anne of Beaujeu except that she gave France a period of peace and prosperity, worked faithfully and well until the young king claimed his power, and then handed it quietly over to him.

The new king was a dreamer. In his mind he saw the kingdom of France stretching far over the snow-clad Alps down into Italy. He knew nothing of war, but he had a splendid army and at its head he rode down into the coveted country. The Italians were a people very fond of beautiful pictures, fair landscapes and handsome men and women. When they saw the French king they were shocked at his ugliness. One Italian writer described him thus: "His head was big; his nose hooked and large, his lips rather flat, chin round with a kind of ditch in it, his eyes large and starting out of his head, his neck too short and wanting in stiffness, and his back broad." This was the prince who looked upon himself as a gorgeous knight riding down into Italy.

He thought his march was one long triumph, for the Italians, in no way prepared for war, opened their city gates to welcome him, and Charles rode proudly in, thinking himself a conqueror. Had he gone in as a friend the people might have liked him, but he was very cruel and so left behind bitter hatred. Down, down, into the very southernmost part of Italy, he marched, conquering city after city, so he thought. But when he had ended his march and had sent back word to France of his glorious conquest of Italy, he found that not only were the

Italians in the north banding against him, but Spain and other countries were leagued with them. The other countries of Europe had no desire that France should become too powerful. As Charles marched home, he found the gates of the cities he considered his own shut in his face. Once he was forced, much against his will, to go into battle. At length, after great difficulties, he and a small part of his army reached Paris. The soldiers Charles left in the Italian cities either died of pest or escaped home by sea. Finally every Frenchman was driven out of Italy.

For many years the king who had caused all this disaster to his splendid army and brought so much suffering upon Italy, wasted his time traveling idly from place to place, holding merry tournaments in every town. Then grief came to him. His two baby boys died. A great seriousness came over Charles, and he listened eagerly to the teachings of the Church. He thought of good Saint Louis, and tried like him to establish peace and justice in France. He held public audiences, when he sat for hours listening to the complaints of his people, particularly the poor. Remembering the beautiful pictures and buildings he had seen in Italy, he sent for Italian painters and architects to build a splendid palace at Amboise. Here he had hoped to live

many days, but before the château was finished he died without an heir, leaving his throne to a distant cousin, Louis of Orleans, who thus became Louis XII of France.

Louis loved his people, and was so kind to his nobles and his peasants that he was called the father of his country. Some of the citizens of Orleans, who had complained of him as duke, and were afraid he would imprison them now that he was king, came humbly to ask pardon.

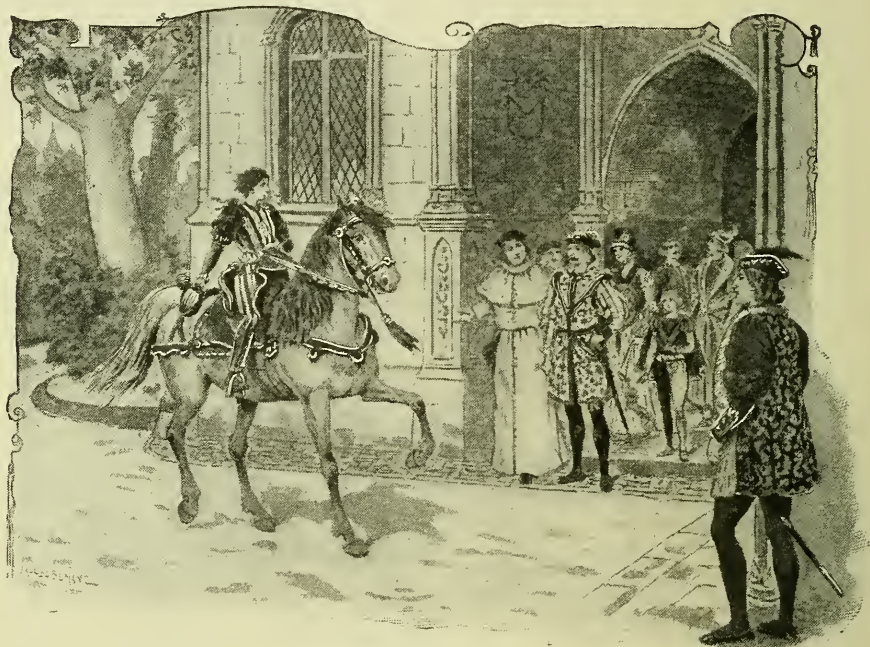
“Rise, sirs,” was Louis’ reply; “the King of France will not avenge the injuries done to the Duke of Orleans.”

Like Charles, he went to war with Italy and was at first successful, but in the end he, too, was defeated. In all Louis’ battles there was one very prominent figure, the Chevalier Bayard, who was called the “fearless and blameless knight.” His fathers and grandfathers had all fought for the kings of France, and when Bayard was a little boy he used to say to his mother:—

“I, too, will carry arms like my father, and be a brave knight.”

Not long after this, Bayard’s uncle came to visit them, and offered to take the boy to town with him. The village tailor was sent for, and the good old man sat up all night to make clothes for the boy, working

“on velvet, satin and other things needful to clothe a good knight.” The next day Bayard, dressed in his fine new clothes, mounted his pony and was ready to ride out into the world. His mother came



Bayard the Page

down into the courtyard of the castle to see him start. She brought him a purse of gold and a little packet of clean linen. With tears in her eyes she bade him good-by.

“Remember,” she charged him, “to love and serve God; to be courteous to your elders and merciful to the poor; to tell the truth, and be loyal, brave, and generous always.”

After kissing his mother good-by, Bayard trotted off by the side of his uncle, glad to leave behind him the dull castle and to go out in the world and learn to become a knight. For many years he was only a page in the household of the Duke of Savoy, but at seventeen he was an armed knight.



Bayard holds the Bridge

When France was at war with Spain, in one of the first battles, Bayard had two horses killed under him, and took a flag of the enemy. Soon no general wished to go to war without him, for his good humor and bravery delighted every one. One day he saved the whole army. The soldiers were en-

camped upon the bank of a river, when Bayard suddenly saw the enemy's cavalry approaching a bridge which was poorly guarded. He called to his companions to come and help him, and rushed forth to meet the troop that was just reaching the bridge. Assailed on all sides, he leaned against a parapet and defended himself like a young lion. Then help arrived with the cry, "France and Bayard!" and, at the very name, the Spanish fled.

FRANCIS I

WHEN Louis XII died, he had no son to succeed him, so the crown went to a cousin, a young count, Francis of Angoulême, only twenty years old, who had married one of the daughters of Louis. Like Charles and Louis, Francis I wanted to rule Italy. Because his predecessors had failed, he longed the more to be victorious. So, gathering a mighty army, he moved with them over the Alps, so rapidly, and through such difficult, unknown passes, that the Italians, when they saw them, cried:—

"Truly the French must fly over the Alps!"

But when it came to a battle, the French were badly beaten. If night had not put an end to the fighting, their forces would have been cut to pieces. But Francis was a brave leader. All night he sat



King Francis knighted by Bayard

on horseback, sometimes almost alone, to be ready should the Swiss and Italians attack. As he sat there in the darkness, he could tell by the muffled voices about him that his men were gathering again. With the morning the enemy pressed forward to complete their victory, but the French stood firm, fighting with such bravery that the Swiss had to retreat. So after all the French won the day. Bayard, the noble knight, was there, and raising his sword above the king's head dubbed him "Sir Francis," because of his great courage in the battle.

This pleased the king very much, for, like Louis XII, he delighted in all the splendor of knighthood and chivalry. When he went back to France, he invited Henry VIII, King of England, to visit him. Henry did not come to Paris, but the scene of the meeting was a plain near Ardres, not far from Calais, which latter was still an English possession. Francis tried to amaze the English king by his wealth and splendor, and Henry sought to dazzle Francis by his own magnificence and that of his

court, and for this reason the plain near Ardres has always borne the name of the Field of the Cloth of Gold.



King Francis

The two kings were very friendly. Francis, with only two gentlemen and a page, rode into Henry's camp early one morning, and finding Henry still abed waited on him while he dressed. When the English king returned the visit, he saw some

of the French soldiers wrestling, so he challenged Francis to try a fall with him. Francis was much the lighter weight, but he was quicker, and soon

threw the stout Henry, much to the amusement of all witnessing the match.

While these two kings were making merry, the young Austrian emperor, Charles V, who had suddenly become master of Austria, Spain, and Germany, was quietly planning how he could join Italy to his possessions.

“Ever farther,” was his motto.

The rest of Francis’ reign was spent in long wars with this ambitious prince. Seldom were the French successful. Once, in the battle of Pavia, Charles took the French king prisoner. So complete was the victory of the Austrians that Francis wrote home to his mother:—

“All is lost save our honor!”

These long wars cost much money and made France very poor. But the court was gay and brilliant. Young German princes were sent here to learn French manners. The king was extravagant in his tastes, and so long as he could get money he spent it freely. From some of the old bills we can see how it slipped through his fingers.

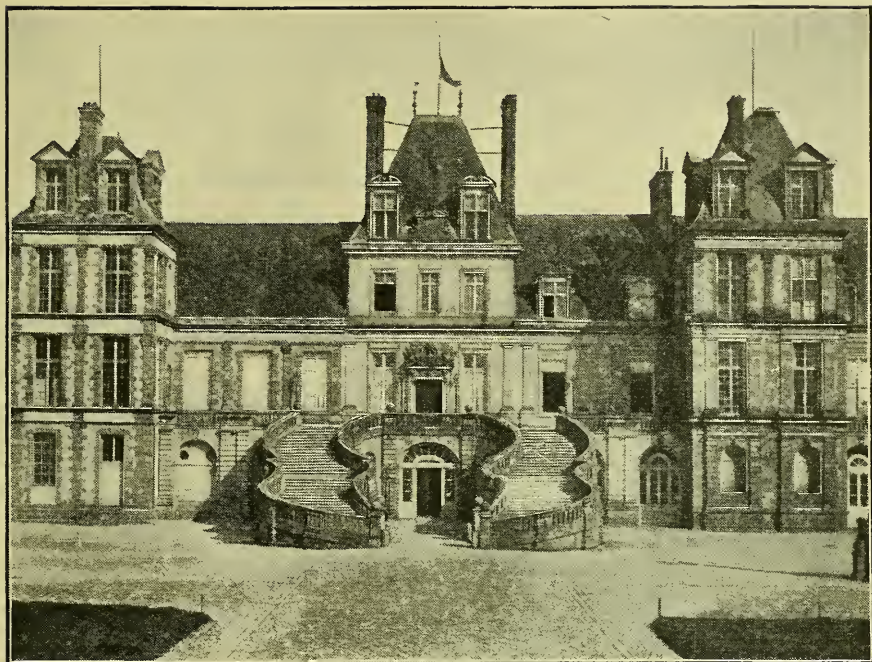
“For necessities; for a splendid bronze horse and rider; for a diamond cross; for furs and velvets from Genoa; for rare trees to be planted in the gardens at Fontainebleau; for a menagerie, — eight horses,

four camels, six ostriches, a lion, seven pairs of birds, and eight hares from Fez."

Then there were other bills, for type to print a poor poet's verses; to help scholars; to buy a horse for the royal cook, so that he might journey through the land with the king; and to pay the eighteen hundred workmen who for twelve years were employed on the great palace at Chambord.

Chambord had been but a bare fortress when Francis began to reign, but it was the king's idea to change it into a palace more beautiful than any he had seen in Italy. It was so large when it was completed that four hundred guests with their horses and servants could be entertained there at one time. Around the castle were parks, terraces, gardens with open-air theaters, and tournament fields. There were woods stretching far away, filled with wild boars to hunt. All over the palace were secret towers and staircases. One very beautiful spiral staircase in the court greatly delighted Francis, because two people could ascend and descend it at the same time without seeing each other.

At Fontainebleau, too, Francis built another beautiful château, with gardens, orange groves, fountains, and green lawns smooth as velvet. Italian architects were brought to France to build this castle, and many art treasures from Italy were preserved within it.



Château of Fontainebleau

The people loved Francis I because he did so much to make their country beautiful, and because "he loved to do a favor and see men leave his presence with their faces shining with gratitude."

THE PERIOD OF RELIGIOUS WARS

Now came the time of wars and persecutions. One king after another ruled over France, and all were troubled because their Protestant and Catholic subjects could not live peaceably together. The Protestants were called Huguenots, from a German

word which means partners in an oath. They had left the Catholic church, which up to this time had been the one church in all France, because they wished a much simpler form of worship. But they

were not content to meet in their own churches and worship in their own way. They went into the Catholic churches, tore down the images of saints, and broke the beautiful stained windows. Then the Catholics were angry and attacked the



Catherine de Medici

Huguenots. Both claimed that their religion was the better one, but neither party sought to prove it by showing themselves to be the more honorable, industrious, and charitable men and women. In vain one old man, Michel de l'Hôpital, the famous chancellor, who loved France, cried : —

“ Cast aside these names of Catholic and Protestant, over which you are constantly quarreling, and keep only the common one of Christians.”

The religious wars began. On both sides were

splendid captains and brave men. Among the Catholics the greatest leader was the Duke of Guise. Among the Protestants, Admiral Coligny was the best. Great battles were fought. At last, after much bloodshed, all seemed to be peacefully arranged. Catherine de Medici, who had married the son of Francis I, was queen mother of the young king, Charles IX. As a way out of these religious troubles, she offered one of her daughters in marriage to a young Protestant prince, Henry of Béarn in Navarre. Henry was a noble prince and much loved by his people. If you should go to Pau in southern France to-day, you could see the cradle in which Henry slept when a baby. But it was not made like most cradles, of wood or straw; it was the



Henry of Navarre and the Shepherd
Boys

big shell of a tortoise. When Henry was a boy, his mother taught him herself, and sent him to play out on the hills with the shepherd boys, so he grew up to be a strong, healthy man. No wonder

Catherine was pleased to have her daughter marry him.

At the wedding there were great festivities, and all the Protestant nobles were invited to attend. Admiral Coligny came, of whom the young king, Charles IX, was so fond that he used to call him "father." Three days after the wedding, Coligny was shot in the streets of Paris, presumably as the result of a Catholic plot. Catherine now feared that the Huguenots would try to revenge the admiral's death, and she frightened her son into thinking that he would be dethroned if he did not put all the Protestants to death. Charles hesitated, but at last replied: —

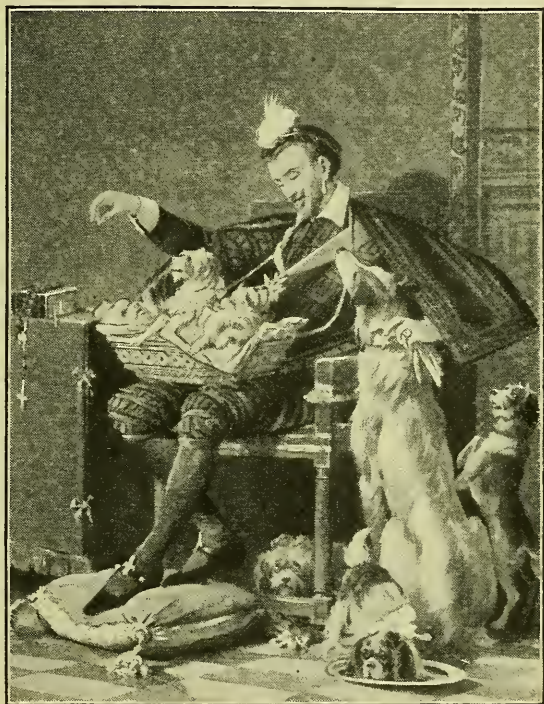
"Yes, kill them all. Do not let one be left to reproach me!"

So on the eve of the feast of Saint Bartholomew the great bell of the church of Saint Germain, back of the Louvre, rang out at midnight, and then all the bells in Paris began to ring. This was the signal for the attack on the Protestants. The followers of the Duke of Guise, wearing white bands on their arms to distinguish them from the Huguenots, came forth and put all the Protestants to death. It was a terrible night. The young king never forgot it. In his dreams he was haunted by bloody faces, and at last he died, crying: —

“O God, forgive me. Have mercy upon me, if Thou canst.”

The new king, Henry III, was a very strange man. What he cared most for was his fine clothes and his personal beauty. He even slept in a mask,

for the sake of his complexion, and wore gloves to preserve the whiteness of his hands. Every day he stood over his queen while she had her hair dressed, to see that it was done in the most becoming fashion. Another hobby of his was little dogs. He used often to carry



Henry III and his Pet Dogs

a basket of them around his neck. He had no children, so the people knew that the crown must pass from him to his cousin, Henry of Navarre. This angered the Duke of Guise and many of the Catholics, for Henry of Navarre was a Protestant. They formed a party to keep this Protestant prince from

reigning. This made three great political parties in France: first, the party led by the Duke of Guise, composed of those Catholics who were loyal to Henry III, but opposed to Henry of Navarre; second, the Catholics who were loyal to both Henrys; and, third, the Protestants. The Guises were so powerful that the king himself feared to stay in Paris, and he formed a plot to kill the duke. Greatly did he rejoice when he heard the news of the murder of the Duke of Guise. But his happiness did not last long. He himself was stabbed to death by a monk in disguise, who had gained admittance to Henry's private cabinet. Then Henry of Navarre was proclaimed Henry IV of France.

KING HENRY OF NAVARRE

THE new king had to fight his way to the throne. At Ivry he first met his enemies. Drawing up his army, he rode down the line, crying to his soldiers:

"My friends, I am your king. You are Frenchmen. Yonder is the enemy. If you lose your standards, follow my white plume; you will always find it in the path of honor and of victory."

With a shout of "Long live King Henry of Navarre," the cavalry rode fiercely into battle. The white plume was victorious. Then Henry went on

to Paris. He found the gates of the capital closed in his face. The citizens and thirteen hundred Catholic monks and priests, still wearing their clerical gowns, but carrying muskets on their shoulders, came forth on the walls to defend Paris against the



Henry of Navarre at the Battle of Ivry

Protestant king. So Henry lay there in siege many months. He was a kind general, however, and allowed food to be sent into Paris to the sick in the hospitals, and even let the old and weak pass out through his lines unharmed, so that they might escape starvation. At last, one morning, Henry

attended mass in the Abbey of Saint Denis. As he crossed the threshold he met the archbishop and his procession of clergy.

"Who are you, sir?" inquired the archbishop.

"The king of France," was Henry's reply.

"What do you here?"

"I come to be received into the Roman Catholic church!"

"Do you desire it?"

"I both will and desire it."

Then Henry knelt and was received into the church, while the old abbey rang with the shouts of the joyful people who hastened to see the ceremony.

Later, Henry was crowned Henry IV of France in the Cathedral of Chartres. He was a merciful king and granted pardon to all who had fought against him. He even let a large number of Spanish troops, who had come to help the Catholics, leave the city unharmed. As they marched by Henry and saluted, he said:—

"Go, gentlemen, and commend me to your king. Go in peace, but return no more!"

Henry, although now a Catholic, did not forget his Protestant friends. He made a law whereby they could live peacefully in the land and have their own churches, schools, and colleges.

War was now over in France. The farmers could

once more sow their seed and build their homes with no fear that soldiers would come to burn or plunder them.



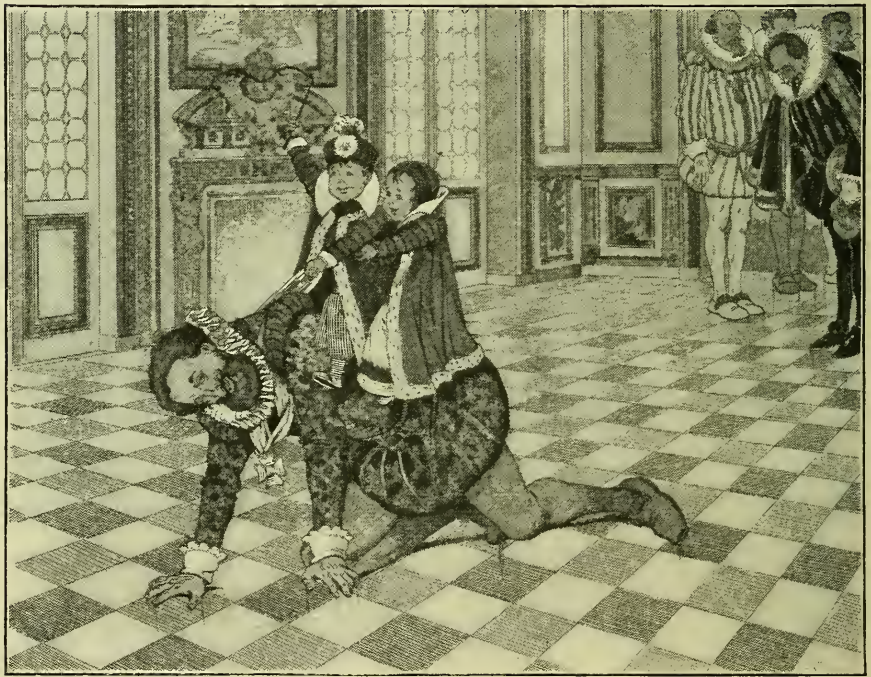
The Good King Henry IV

“I am the father of my land,” said good King Henry. “If God spares my life, I will work until every one of my peasants is rich enough to have a good fat chicken in his pot for Sunday dinner.”

Henry himself was very poor at first, for the royal domain was greatly in debt. He had scarcely enough money to pay his tailor or his cook. Still, with the help of his great minister, Sully, he brought

prosperity to France. They caused bridges to be rebuilt, roads and canals to be improved, mulberry trees to be planted, silk looms to be set up, and increased the prosperity of the country in many ways.

One thing troubled Henry. He had no children to whom he could leave his great kingdom, nor did



Henry IV and his Children

he love his wife. So the Pope allowed him to divorce Margaret of Valois and to marry Marie de Medici. When he became the father of two sons and three daughters, never was there a prouder parent. The Austrian ambassador was greatly

amused one day when he came into the king's chamber, and found him capering round the room on his hands and knees, with two small boys on his back.

Although Henry did so much for France, and there never was a king more beloved, he was stabbed by a cruel man one day while riding in his carriage.

"I am wounded," was all the king said as he fell back against the cushions and died.

The people wept in the streets, mourning, "The good King Henry is dead!"

RICHELIEU, THE GREAT MINISTER

WHEN Henry IV died, his eldest son, Louis, was only nine years old, so once more in France a queen mother became regent. But Marie de Medici was not like the good Blanche of Castile. She was a weak woman, entirely under the influence of favorites, chiefly an Italian adventurer and his wife. These two people really governed France until the day Louis was sixteen, that is, of age to reign. He ordered the arrest of the Italian favorite, and if he resisted, he was to be killed. He did resist, and was slain. Soon afterwards his wife was condemned to death and the queen mother banished

from the court. Louis XIII was now king of France.

But Louis did not want to rule. He was too indolent to trouble himself to think out problems of government. At last he found a man to be his



Cardinal Richelieu

minister who was a great statesman as well as churchman, — Cardinal Richelieu. From now, until he died, Richelieu was the most powerful man not only in France but in Europe. He had been in the army before he entered the church, and this helped him to understand and to guide the long wars of Louis' reign.

First, Richelieu made war against the Huguenots, in spite of the protecting laws that Henry IV had made for them. King Henry had even given them several cities, and one of these, La Rochelle, Louis and his minister now marched against. When they found that they must besiege the town, —

for the Huguenots refused to give it up, — they were greatly troubled, for the city was situated on a river, and they feared that the English would send aid to the Protestants by this passage. So Richelieu sank great ships, all chained together, in the harbor, so that when the English came they might not reach the city. La Rochelle held out bravely many months. Then the Huguenots sent out their women and children to the king, hoping that their thin, starved faces would move Louis to pity. But Louis was merciless and drove the helpless creatures back from his lines. At last, when many of the garrison had died, and the survivors were so weak that they could hardly lift a gun, the town surrendered. The lives of the people were spared, but the walls of the city were torn down and the churches destroyed.

Although Louis and Richelieu were so cruel, other men were busy doing deeds of great kindness. One priest, Vincent de Paul, gathered together all the homeless children of Paris and gave them into the care of good women. He also started the order of the Sisters of Mercy, who are like nuns except that, instead of living entirely in convents, they go about nursing the sick, teaching poor children, and finding homes for orphans. The great ladies at court, even the queen herself, became interested

in helping the poor, and used to disguise themselves in simple gowns and go out and care for the sick.

Meanwhile, Richelieu was busy with wars. He was a harsh, cruel man; but he was absolutely devoted to the interests of his country, and worked always to increase the greatness of France. At the end of his rule he had added four provinces to the kingdom. But he was very old now, and so sick that he had to be carried in a litter. On his death-bed he said:—

“I shall soon appear before my Judge. May He condemn me if I ever meant aught save the welfare of church and state. I have the satisfaction of knowing that I never deserted the king, that I leave his kingdom exalted and his enemies abased.”

Louis XIII, who had been but a shadow in the background of his great minister, survived the latter only six months.

THE SUN KING

FRANCE had many boy kings, but none younger than Louis XIV. He inherited his kingdom when only four years old, and as in the case of the other boy kings, his mother governed in his stead until he was of age. The queen felt the need of a wise man to help her rule, so she chose Cardinal Mazarin to



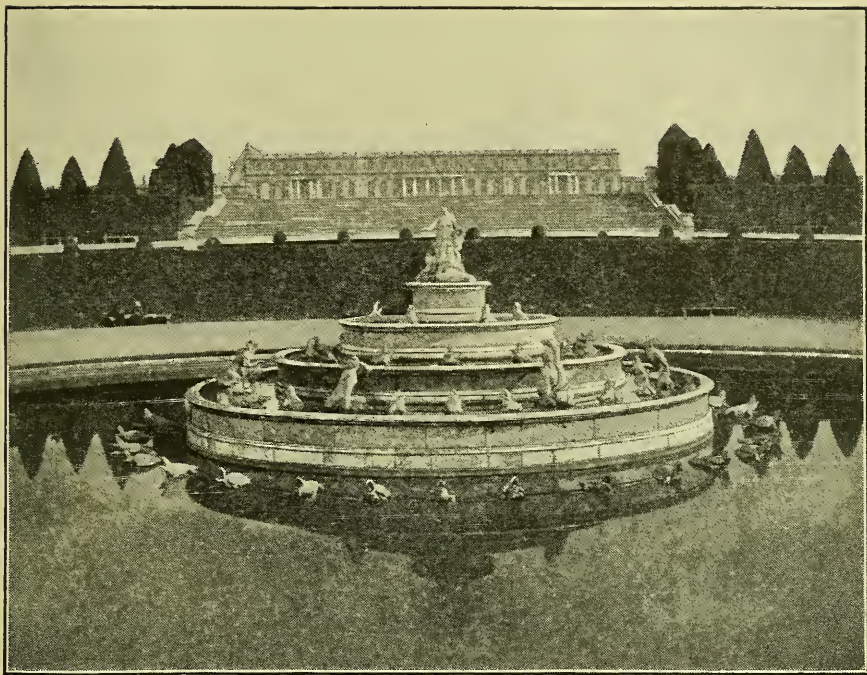
Louis XIV

be her minister, a very clever man who had been trained under the great Richelieu. Louis, as a child, was very gentle, quiet, and rather stupid at his books. People thought that he would grow up to be a kind, peace-loving king, who would avoid all wars, and whom his people would love, but whom history would ignore. But Mazarin was a better reader of character than this. As he kept his sharp eyes upon the lad, day after day, he observed: —

“He is a rocket that will go off late, but will go farther than any of the rest. There is stuff enough in him to make four kings and one honest man.”

When Mazarin died, the ministers asked the young king, who had just come of age, to whom they should go with questions of state.

“To me,” Louis replied; “I am the state;” and through the long years of the rest of his reign Louis never had a prime minister. Every morning he worked many hours with the ministers of the several departments. But he enjoyed festivities more. His father had owned a hunting box, not far from Paris, at Versailles. Here Louis caused to be built a beautiful palace, whose walls were hung with pictures by the most famous artists of the day. There were beautiful gardens and terraces round the palace, and in front a lake in which were the finest fountains in the world. It was the king’s great



Château of Versailles

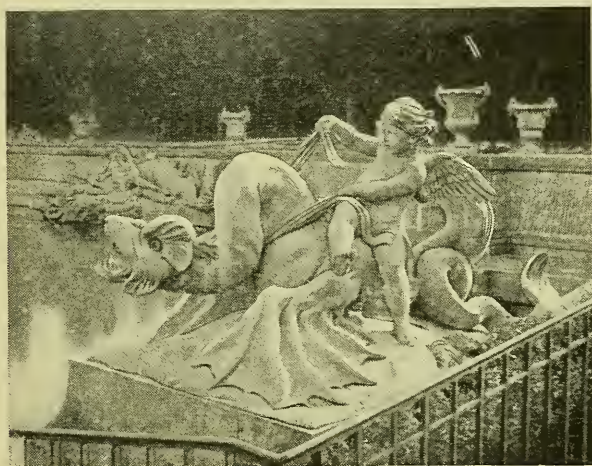
delight in the evening to turn this palace into a very fairyland, with music, lights, dancing, and banquets. Here through the gardens strayed the lords and ladies of the court, dressed in gorgeous silks and satins and velvets. Sometimes they had masquerade balls, and then Louis would dress as Apollo, so he became known as the "Sun King."

All this charmed Louis because he loved glory. He wished to have France the most powerful country in the world, not because he loved France and its people, but because he was the king of France, and he wished to be the greatest king in the world.

Thus he carried on many wars that brought him sometimes victory, sometimes defeat, but always made his people dislike him more and more, for they wished for peace.

When Louis' queen, Maria Theresa, died, he did not marry another princess, but the widow of a poor poet, Madame de Maintenon, who had been governess to Louis' children. But Louis never called her queen, although he loved her and was often guided by her advice. She was a good woman, but narrow-minded, and she caused the king to do one of the most cruel acts of his reign. Madame de Maintenon was a staunch Catholic and hated the Huguenots, although they were good and industrious subjects. So she persuaded the king to persecute them. All Protestant worship was forbidden; Protestant pastors were obliged to leave France within fifteen days, and dragoons were quartered in all Protestant homes to eat the poor people's food, spoil their goods, and torment them until they should become Catholics. More than this, Louis would not permit his Protestant subjects to leave the country, as many of them wished to do. If they were caught trying to escape, they were put in prison. Many Huguenots, however, did flee safely to England, Germany, and America, where they settled and became excellent citizens.

Soon after this Protestant persecution all Europe became involved in a terrible war. The king of Spain died, leaving no direct heir to the Spanish throne. But there were soon claims for it. Louis had married the sister of the late Spanish king, so he demanded the throne for his grandson. The German emperor was descended from Charles V, who had been both emperor of Germany and king of Spain, so he desired his son to have the throne. Louis' plans were ready first. He saluted his



Fountain at Versailles

grandson Philip as king of Spain and sent him off to Madrid with an army, saying:—

“There are no more Pyrenees.”

By this he meant that Spain and France should henceforth be one kingdom. But Europe thought France was too powerful already, and so began the War of the Spanish Succession. The French were badly beaten.

Louis was now an old man, and a very unhappy

one. All the great men of his day were dead. All his sons were dead. He had lived such a selfish life that no one loved him. Still, up to the very end, he bore himself nobly and splendidly. He was always the king. When he knew he was dying, he called his five-year-old great-grandchild to his bed, and said to him : —

“ My child, you are going to be a great king. Do not imitate me in my love of building and war. Strive always to be at peace with your neighbors. Render to God what is His due, and cause your subjects to honor Him. Follow good advice and strive to be a comfort to your people, which I, unfortunately, never have been.”

These were the words of advice from the monarch who had the longest and most eventful reign in French history.

LOUIS XV

ALTHOUGH the words of the dying Louis were printed over the bed of the new little king, he never paid any heed to them. The Duke of Orleans was regent during the first part of the long reign of Louis XV. The duke's mother had puzzled long over her boy's character, and then said : —

“ When he was born, all the fairies came and gave him a talent, so he possessed them all. But, later,

came an old, envious fairy, whom they had forgotten to invite to the feast, and, instead of giving him a talent, made all those the other fairies had given him useless."

So while the Duke of Orleans was very brave, generous, and intelligent by nature, he was too lazy and fond of evil pleasures to be a good regent. Worse than this, the young Louis was much influenced by him, and, when he became of age, so he could rule, was fond only of amusing himself and cared nothing for his people. He even had a road built around the out-



Louis XV

skirts of Paris, from Versailles to Saint Denis, so he could go hunting without being reminded of his subjects by seeing them. It is small wonder that he did not wish to see their faces, for they were not smiling and happy, full of love for their king. In-

stead, they were dark and sullen, full of hatred for a sovereign who taxed them outrageously, carried on long foreign wars, and never had a kind thought for them. The peasants suffered most, for the weight of the taxes fell on them, — taxes that went into gifts for the king's favorites and into amusements for the court.

One day the good son of the Duke of Orleans took a loaf of sawdust and fern from his pocket, and threw it across the council table to Louis.

"See, sire, that is what your people are eating!" he cried, but Louis was too devoted to his own pleasure to care.

"Things will last my time," the king is reported to have said. "After that let the deluge come!"

All through Louis' reign there were wars. Again all Europe was involved, as at the time of the Spanish succession. Now it was an Austrian monarch who died, and left his kingdom to his only child, his beautiful daughter, Maria Theresa. But five European princes rose up and claimed the throne. Maria Theresa was a very brave woman, and wished to keep the crown for herself and her little son. So she fled into Hungary, where she called together her nobles, and standing before them in her widow's dress, the baby prince in her arms, said: —

"My friends have deserted me, my relatives have

all turned against me. I and my little boy can trust only in your courage and faithfulness."

When the nobles saw how brave she was, they all cried with one voice:—

"Let us die for our *king*, Maria Theresa!"

Many of them did. They collected a large army, drove out the French, and saved the empire for Maria Theresa and her son.

Louis had one son who, unlike his father, grew up to be a good and noble man, and married a good princess. But because the Dauphin was so kind and upright, Louis hated him and would not let him take any part in state affairs. This good prince died long before his father, so he could never do anything for his country, but he left a little son who afterwards succeeded his grandfather as Louis XVI. Louis XV lived to reign sixty years, and when he died no one mourned him, because he had been so wicked and had made his people suffer so much.

THE LOCKSMITH KING

"The king is dead! Long live the king," sounded the voice of the herald in the great palace. When Louis and his queen, Marie Antoinette, heard these words, they fell on their knees, crying:—

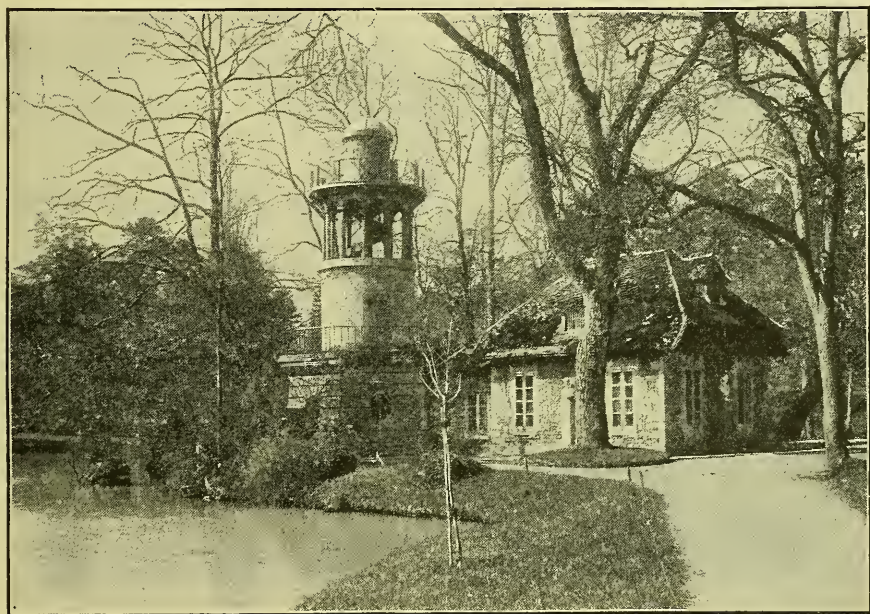
"May God prosper us! We are too young to reign!"

They were too young! Louis was a good prince, but shy and rather stupid. He did not understand the terrible poverty of his people; he did not like to meet strangers and talk to them, and he had none of the knightly dignity of Louis XIV. Two things he enjoyed: one was hunting, the other was shutting himself up in a little tower room and making keys like a common locksmith.

Queen Marie Antoinette was only nineteen. She was a pretty, joyful young girl, delighting in balls, handsome gowns, and frolics of every sort. Sometimes she and the court ladies would slip away from the great palace of Versailles, and go down through the gardens and park to a pretty rustic villa called the Little Trianon. There they dressed in simple muslin dresses and straw hats, and played at being dairymaids.

This was the king and queen who were ruling France when the Americans signed their Declaration of Independence. One French nobleman, Lafayette, ran away from home to help the Americans in their war for freedom, and afterwards Louis XVI sent troops over to help them. When the Americans had won their freedom, Lafayette and his friends began to see that the nobles were oppressing the poor people in their own land of France. The king, because of the discontent of his people, was

forced to call together the States-General, — that is, representatives from the nobility, the clergy, and the commons, to try to find some remedy for the poverty and misery of the country. The commons, or representatives from the people, soon saw that the nobility and clergy would never help them to make just



Little Trianon

laws, so they decided to leave the States-General and meet by themselves. Thus, these men, under their leader, Mirabeau, banded themselves together under the name of National Assembly. The king was frightened now, and forbade the rebellious commons to meet in the great hall at Versailles. Instead of disbanding, they held their meetings in a

small building, called the Tennis Court, because there the nobles had been in the habit of playing that game. They determined never to separate until they had framed a constitution for the suffering people of France. They told the king, "We are here by the will of the people and will be driven out only at the point of the bayonet."

Louis felt that he must yield, so he ordered the rest of the deputies to join with the National Assembly.

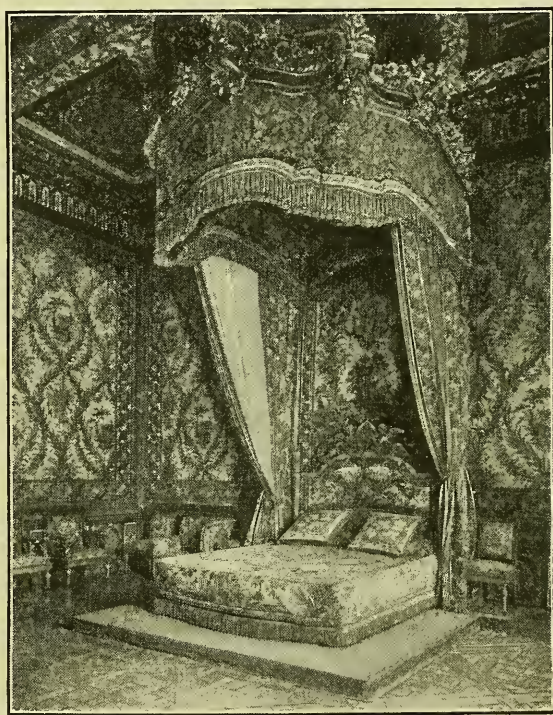
Still the people of Paris were not satisfied. They feared that the king would not keep his promise to them. They chose the colors red, white, and blue, called the tricolor, as their emblem, and with cockades of these colors in their hats they rushed upon the great arsenal of Paris, overcame the guard, and thus provided themselves with plenty of cannon and arms. Their success here gave them new zeal. All titles of nobility were abolished, and dukes and nobles bore simply the common name of "citizen." On July 14, 1789, the cry went through the mob, "To the Bastille!" This was the great prison of Paris, where all the political prisoners were held. Men, women, and children rushed to the building, and began to demolish it. They wished all the enemies of the king to be free in those days. One of the courtiers, in terror, came running to the king

to tell him that the Bastille had fallen into the hands of the Paris mob.

"Why, this is a revolt," said the astonished king.

"No, sire," the nobleman answered, "this is a revolution."

Still the slow-minded king did not believe it. Life went gayly on at the palace of Versailles. One evening there was a grand banquet given by the officers of the guard. The king and queen were there, and all the guests had arisen and were singing while they trampled the tri-color under foot. When news of this reached Paris, the people were furious.



Bed of Marie Antoinette

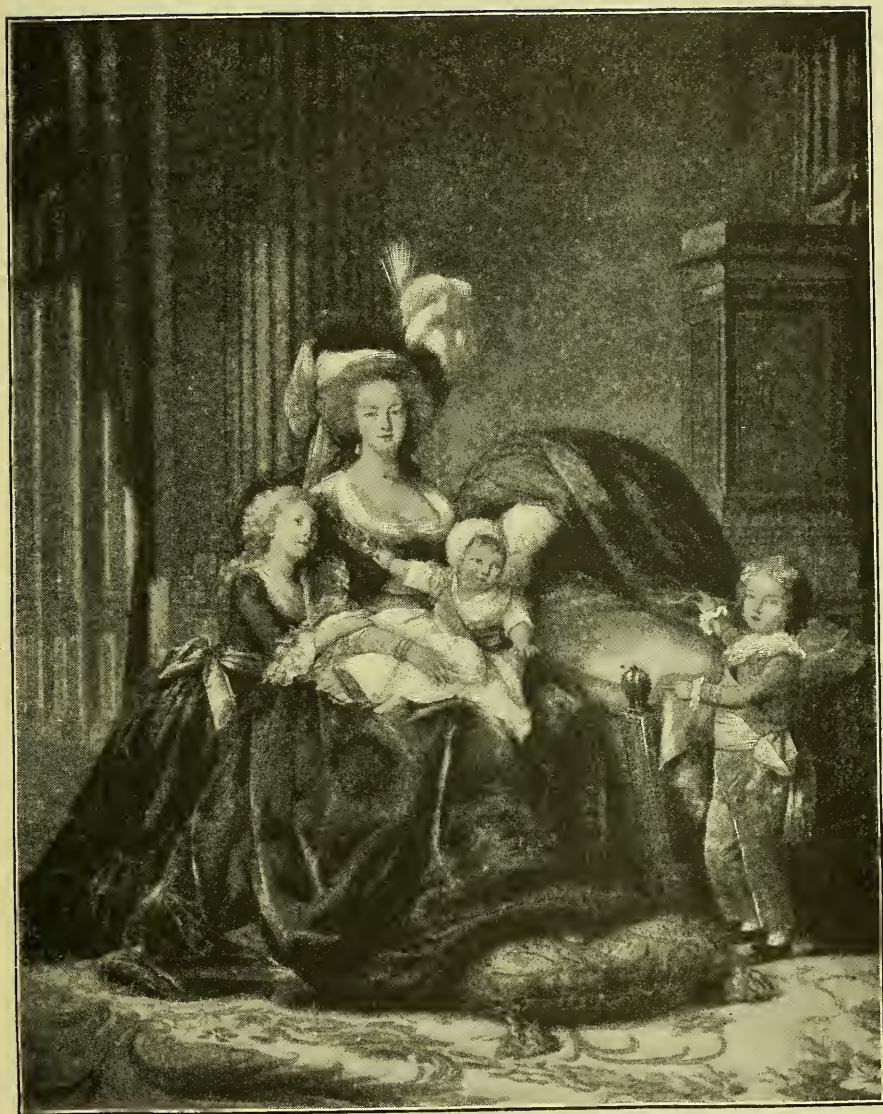
When the women of Paris, many of whom were starving, heard of the great banquet at Versailles, they rushed in rage out of the city gates and on to the palace, shouting the one word, — "Bread! Bread!"

The king would not let the soldiers fire on a mob chiefly made up of women, and tried instead to pacify them by his kindly words. Still they insisted upon taking the royal family back to Paris with them. The king, queen, little Dauphin, and his sister were therefore led prisoners to their capital by this rabble, chiefly composed of fishwives, who shouted as they hurried them along:—

“We shall no longer be hungry, for we have with us the baker, the baker’s wife, and the baker’s boy.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

For many months Louis and his wife and children were kept imprisoned in the Tuileries at Paris, with a guard watching over them. The king grew very restless, kept thus indoors, and longed so for his hunting that one day he and the whole royal family managed to escape, and started for the palace at Saint Cloud. The people, thinking they were trying to flee from France, stopped the carriage and drove them back to their prison. Again many long, dreary months passed, then Louis planned another escape. This time he decided to try and get out of France. He wrote many secret letters to friends in Germany, and finally the plan seemed complete. The royal family, in disguise, set out one cold, moon-



Marie Antoinette and her Children

less night on their perilous journey. Little notice was paid to the heavy coach that was bearing the king and queen away from their throne as fast as the horses could travel. Escape seemed almost certain now, for they were within a few miles of the border line, where friends were to meet them. Suddenly the light from a lantern was flashed into the carriage. It fell full on the pale, well-known faces of the fugitives. The horses were seized and forced to halt. A guard was called, and once more Louis and his family were brought prisoners to Paris.

The kings of Austria and Russia now demanded that Louis should be restored to his throne. This made the French people angrier than ever. They rose again in a mob, and hurrying on to the Tuileries, swarmed up the stairs to kill the royal family. The king, however, met them so calmly and boldly that the mob retired without harming any of them. But many of the old nobles and clergy were imprisoned or massacred, and the royal family were moved from the Tuileries to the Temple, a dark, gloomy prison.

A new assembly, called the National Convention, was now called. Its first act was to declare that royalty was at an end in France. The French Republic took the place of the French Kingdom.

Next Louis was brought to trial before this convention; and it was decided that he was guilty of conspiring against the liberty of the nation and must be executed.

He was allowed to go back to the Temple to say good-by to his wife and children, and the next morning was led to the scaffold.

“Frenchmen, I die innocent! I pardon my enemies, and pray that France —”

Here the drums began to beat, drowning his voice. As the executioner held up the severed head of the king, the people shouted with joy: —



The Dauphin

“Long live the Republic! Hurrah for liberty!”

Then they set about killing all the friends of the king. Marie Antoinette, after a longer imprisonment, was also beheaded, and the poor little Dauphin probably died of neglect in his prison. The little girl, the Princess Marie Therese, was the only

one of the royal family who was allowed to live. She at last escaped to Russia.

These were the awful days of the French Revolution.

THE LITTLE CORPORAL

DURING one of these terrible winters a group of boys in a military school at the French town of Brienne were wandering up and down their long hall and looking out at the snowdrifts. There was nothing they wanted to do indoors, and outdoors it stormed furiously. At last a short, rather quiet boy spoke up: —

“Why not get some shovels and make passages through the snow and build some forts? Then we can divide ourselves into companies and have a battle. I choose to be captain of the attacking party!”

A shout of joy went up from the boys, and in a few moments they were tumbling over one another in the drifts, hard at work making snow forts. For fifteen days, in their play hours, they waged a mock battle. We do not know whether the young Napoleon Bonaparte, for that was the name of the boy who started the game, gained the victory or not, but he was such a wonderful soldier in later years that we think he must have won this first play battle, too.



Napoleon at School

When Napoleon grew older and left the school for the army, he soon found his way to Paris. At this time the National Convention was split up into several sections, and Napoleon sided with those who wished to form a more stable government, to be called the Directory. The opposing sections, among whom were many Royalists, started to resist by force. Napoleon was placed in command by the Directory, and quickly and wisely went to work. He placed his cannon along the sides of the streets and bridges, so that it was impossible for the rebellious sections to make an attack without being swept

down by the shot. The revolt lasted only a few hours. The Directory saw that the young general was a genius in war, and sent him to Italy at the head of their army. When Napoleon took command of his troops, whom he found poor and half starved, he said: —

“Soldiers, you are hungry and naked. The Republic owes you much, but she has no money to pay you. I am come to lead you down to the richest towns and most fertile fields under the sun. All shall be yours. Soldiers, will you come?”

These words aroused the troops and they all shouted: —

“Yes! Yes!”

Then Napoleon began his campaign. His method was to make exceedingly rapid marches, so as to come upon the enemy unawares. He led his men over the Alps so fast that they had to leave tents and baggage behind, and sleep at night either on the cold ground or in dirt hovels. But Napoleon slept on the ground too; walked by their side as they marched, tending the sick and cheering them on with fresh courage, so that his army was devoted to him.

Down through Italy the French marched, fighting a dozen battles, and at the end of the year they had conquered five armies, each one larger than

their own. The Italians begged for peace. Napoleon granted it; but made them send many of their most beautiful pictures and statues to Paris and pay a large sum of money. At Venice he even took away the beautiful gilded bronze horses that stand guard above the great door of Saint Mark's Cathedral.

Napoleon returned to Paris a great conqueror. The people all came out to meet him and hailed him as their hero. But the Directory was jealous of his popularity and put him at the head of another army so that he should leave Paris. They had a great scheme for conquering England, but decided that they would seize her rich province of India first. Napoleon, with thirty-six thousand picked men, sailed for Egypt, thinking that the nearest route to India, and made a long march across the desert. At last they met the Egyptian army, not far from the pyramids.

"Soldiers," cried Napoleon, "from yonder pyramids forty centuries are watching you!"

The Egyptians rode fiercely down on Napoleon's foot soldiers, but the French charged again and again until they won a complete victory. The Egyptians always called Napoleon, "the lord of fire," because of the terrible charges he made; but Napoleon's men had long ago given him the name



of "The Little Corporal," an affectionate title which clung to him even after he had become a great general.

After many more battles Napoleon and his men returned to France. He found the leaders of the Directory quarreling among themselves and unpopular with the people. When he entered the council hall at Saint Cloud he was greeted with the cries: —

"Down with the dictator! Death to the tyrant."

Some of the members of the Directory feared that Napoleon, glorying in his victories, would want to rule France, hence they wished him put to death. But Napoleon had his soldiers with him, and, at his word, they entered the hall with their bayonets fixed for a charge.

The Directory was now abolished and three consuls chosen to govern the country. You will not be surprised to hear that Napoleon was the First Consul. He now gave up war and went to live in the old royal palace of the Tuileries and had about him all the state and dignity of a court. He had married a very beautiful woman named Josephine, who did much to gain him friends.

"I win provinces," said Napoleon, "but Josephine wins hearts."

THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON

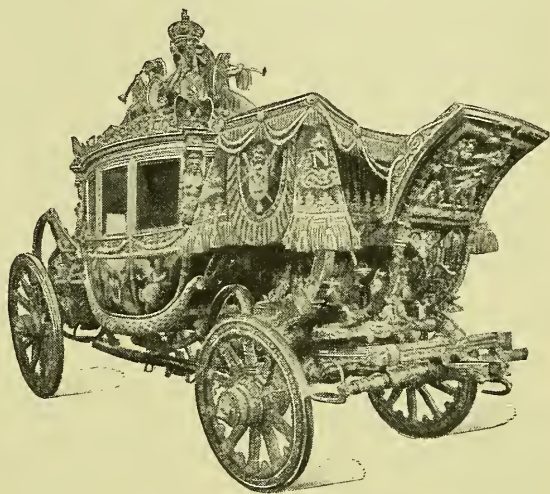
AFTER a few years Napoleon again went to war, and again came back in triumph. Then he settled down and for a few years gave his country peace. He started schools and colleges, built roads and canals, and, best of all, had some of his most skillful lawyers draw up a code of laws for France. So wise were these laws that they are used to-day, and are still called the Code Napoleon.

Napoleon also founded the now famous Legion of Honor. The sign of the legion is a cross on a red ribbon, and it is given to a soldier or citizen who does some deed of remarkable bravery.

But after a few years Napoleon became restless. His genius was for war, and he was happier fighting than doing anything else. In the midst of the wars, Napoleon discovered a conspiracy against him. He found out the conspirators, and had them put to death. But now he did a very cruel thing. He pretended that one of the young princes of the royal house of Condé was in this plot, so he had him arrested and brought to Paris. Napoleon had long been wishing for just such an opportunity to show his power over the Royalists. After a secret and hasty trial, the prince was condemned to die, and he was shot at six in the morning of the following day.

After this no one dared breathe a word against Napoleon. He knew this, and saw that the time was ripe for the carrying out of a long-cherished scheme of his. He declared that it was necessary for the safety and welfare of France that he should be made emperor. The senate and deputies agreed.

The grand ceremony of his coronation took place in the cathedral of Notre Dame, December, 1804. The Pope himself



Napoleon's State Coach

came from Rome to crown Napoleon, but at the last minute the latter seized the crown from the Pope's hands and placed it upon his own head. Then he turned and crowned Josephine as his empress.

Napoleon was now at the height of his power. He was emperor of France and had conquered many kingdoms in Europe, over which he placed his brothers as rulers. England and Russia still defied him. He tried in vain to conquer the former. Germany and Austria had to yield to him. He

even forced the emperor of Austria to give him his daughter, Marie Louise, in marriage. He had divorced the Empress Josephine because she had borne him no children. Great was his joy when a little son was born to Marie Louise. To this child, the King of Rome, as Napoleon called him, he could leave his empire.

Perhaps it was the desire to leave as large an empire as possible to his little boy that made him lead his army far away into Russia. Napoleon wished "to melt all the states of Europe into one, and have Paris for its capital." However, this hope was never realized. When Napoleon reached Moscow, a great Russian city, he found that the people had all fled. At first he thought that all Russia was fleeing before him and he was to be successful in his long campaign. But that night a fire broke out and burned the city to the ground. The people of Moscow themselves had set the city in flames. All food and shelter were destroyed. There was nothing for Napoleon to do but to turn back toward France with his army. The people of Moscow knew this. They knew, too, that Napoleon would meet a more terrible enemy than they. This enemy was the Russian winter. On it came, with wind, snow, and blizzards. The French soldiers died all along the way. They starved to death, for provi-

sions had given out. They froze to death in the snow. They sickened and died, worn out by the terrible hardships of that awful retreat from Moscow. Only the wreck of Napoleon's splendid army



The Retreat from Moscow

ever reached France, and these poor, worn-out men had only tales of defeat and awful misery to tell.

Again Napoleon drained his country of soldiers. He raised an army and won several more battles, but his power was broken after his terrible Russian retreat. The royal princes in their various hiding places began to stir about. England was always

ready to fight Napoleon. The allied powers of Europe rose against him and at last overcame him. He tried to give up his empire to his little son, but England refused to let him. She forced him to lay down his crown, and exiled him to the island of Elba, near the western coast of Italy. Still his army in France loved him. The last thing he did before going into exile was to bid farewell to his Old Guard at Fontainebleau, and to kiss the golden eagle on his standard.

Sadly did the army miss their general, and it is said that they passed around bunches of violets, the badge of Napoleon's family, whispering to one another:—

“ He will return to us in the spring ! ”

BACK FROM EXILE

WHEN the cruel Paris mob imprisoned Louis XVI, his brothers escaped from France and lived in exile during the Revolution and Napoleon's rule. Louis, the oldest, bore the title of Louis XVIII, for the little son of Louis XVI lived some time after his father was put to death, and, although he never reigned, the Royalists always spoke of him as Louis XVII. Louis XVIII fled to England where he had a small court at Hartwell. His private office

was so tiny that it seemed like a cabin in a ship. On the walls were portraits of the king, his brother, and the other members of the imprisoned royal family. The life there was so simple that no one would have guessed it was the household of a king, except for one little ceremony. Whenever Louis rose to leave the room, or entered it, every one else in the room stood, and the queen dropped him a courtesy. Then Louis bowed and kissed her hand. This little form of royal etiquette was always observed, even if the king and queen were alone. But this was all merely playing at being king.

When Napoleon was sent away to the island of Elba, Louis XVIII became king of France in reality. As he entered Paris, the Royalists greeted him with cheers and hurrahs, but most of his people looked coldly at him, as he rode along in his carriage to Notre Dame. The soldiers turned aside in disgust. They had no liking for the stout, infirm old Bourbon king, and longed for their fiery, active emperor, living in exile on his lonely island.

With Louis, many nobles and their families returned to their native country. It was said of these nobles that while they were in exile, "they had learned nothing and forgotten nothing." They came back to find their possessions confiscated. They besought Louis to give them back their estates.

“ The king has his royal castles and estates, just as before the Revolution, why should we be deprived of our possessions ? ” they argued.

But Louis feared the people, and refused to help the nobles in getting back their former estates, which made them very angry.

Meanwhile a great Congress of statesmen from all over Europe was held in Vienna to settle the boundary lines of the different countries which Napoleon had disturbed so greatly. In the midst of one of these meetings word came to them that Napoleon had escaped from Elba, and was back in France. Horror was written on many faces. The Congress had one more meeting, voted Napoleon an outlaw, and then the members hastened back to their own countries to help raise armies to fight their great enemy.

The word was true ; Napoleon had landed in France. To be sure, he had few friends and only four hundred of his former grenadiers, but as he marched through the towns in his old green coat, with the cross of the Legion of Honor on his breast, the soldiers cried again : —

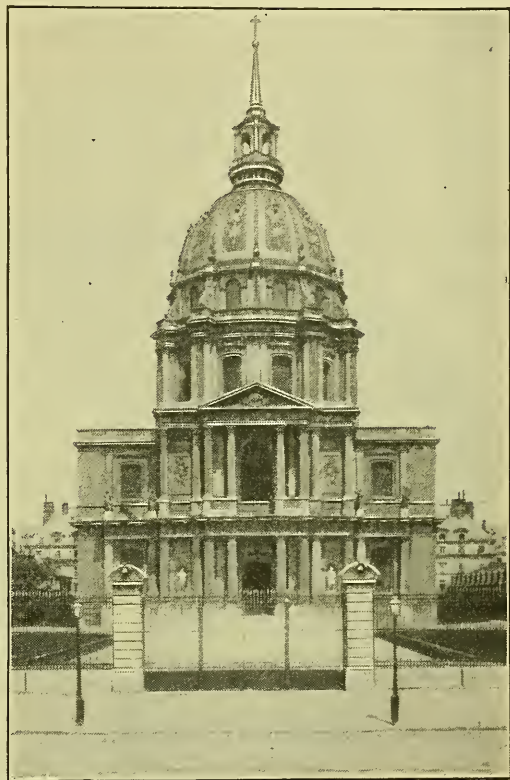
“ Long live the emperor ! ”

They hurried to his standard from far and near. Louis XVIII with his family fled in terror, and once again Napoleon entered Paris amid shouts of joy.

For just one hundred days he ruled. Then he had to fight the allied armies of Europe. He had meantime been collecting his forces, and with them he went forth bravely and hopefully to meet his enemies. The two great forces came in contact at Waterloo, a little Belgian town. There was a terrible battle, and in the end Napoleon was defeated. He escaped to Paris, but his spirit was broken. Again he abdicated, and gave himself up a prisoner to the English. This time they

exiled him to the island of Saint Helena, a lonely island, far out at sea, off the coast of Africa.

For six long, weary years Napoleon lived at Saint Helena, guarded night and day by English soldiers. When he died, he was buried on the island, but in after years his body was brought to Paris, and laid



Napoleon's Tomb

to rest in the splendid tomb at the Invalides. Thus the desire expressed in his will was gratified: —

“I wish to be buried by the river Seine, in the midst of the French people whom I have loved so dearly.”

Louis XVIII came back again to France, but his reign was brief. After his death his brother became



The Children of Charles X .

king, with the title of Charles X. At first the people thought they would like him better than Louis XVIII, for he rode a horse well and had much of the dignity that the Parisians loved to see in a monarch. But he took away the liberties of

the people to such an extent that they rose against him, and he and his family had to flee for their lives. Charles X lived for many years after he ceased to be king, but he never dared go back to France, and died in exile.

THE LITTLE KING OF ROME

Napoleon's little son, like his father, died far away from France. Great had been the rejoicing in Paris on that March morning when the cannon announced to the world that an heir had been born to Napoleon. Windows were thrown up, carriages stopped in the streets, and all the people stood still to count the number of guns. Twenty-one reports meant that the baby was a girl; one hundred and one, that it was a boy. When the twenty-second report sounded, cheers broke forth from every throat, and caps flew into the air. As the emperor stood at the windows looking down on the crowd, mad with joy, tears came into his eyes.

Inside the palace, safe from all the noise, the little prince lay sleeping in his cradle that the people of Paris had given him. It was made of mother-of-pearl, lined with red velvet, and decorated with big golden bees, the crest of the Bonapartes. A figure of Victory, holding a crown set with Napo-

leon's star, spread its wings over the head of the cradle, and at the foot a young eagle gazed at the star and spread its wings as if about to take flight.

That very evening the baby was christened Napoleon, and given the title not only of Prince Imperial but also of King of Rome.



Marie Louise and the King of Rome

When the warm weather came on, Marie Louise and the little Napoleon left Paris to go to Saint Cloud. Here, every sunny day, the King of Rome went to drive in the park, in his gilded baby carriage drawn by two white sheep.

Here, too, he had

his first portrait painted, playing with a cup and ball. Napoleon was away at this time, fighting. The portrait when finished was sent to him, and reached his camp on the eve of a great battle. All the worries and anxieties of the coming day were forgotten when the general saw the painting of his

boy. He placed it on a chair outside his tent and, calling his generals together, declared : —

“ If my son were fifteen years old you may be sure that he would be here in person, among this multitude of brave men, and not merely in a picture.” And the gray-haired grenadiers wept for joy as they looked at the little prince playing with his cup and ball, and thought of his glorious future.

But it was a sad future that lay before the little Napoleon. Within two years his father was in exile on the island of Elba, and he was taken away from France to be brought up as an Austrian at the court of his grandfather. Here he missed his little French playmates sadly and used to say : “ Any one can see that I am not a king. I haven’t any pages.”

He was not allowed to hear much about his father. Even when Napoleon came back and reigned in Paris for the Hundred Days he never saw his son. One message he received from him, a message whispered very low to a French officer who was going from Vienna to Paris : “ You will tell my father,” said the boy, “ that I always love him dearly.”

Afterwards he wrote a letter to Napoleon at Saint Helena and sent him a lock of his hair.

In his father’s will there was one clause which the little King of Rome read many a time. “ Never

forget that you are a French prince." This thought the Austrians tried in vain to drive from his mind. They gave him a German name and title, but at heart the boy was always the King of Rome, the son of the Emperor Napoleon.

When he was five years old he told an artist who was painting his portrait: "I want to be a soldier. I shall fight well. I shall be in the charge." And before he was seven he was wearing a uniform.

From then until he died his greatest delight was drilling his company of soldiers, and reading about his father's victories. He wanted to be ready if ever the French people should call him to come back to be their ruler.

But as he grew up he was not strong. Great anxiety was felt about his health. It was clear that he would never live to rule, even if the call from France came. When he was only twenty-one he died, and was laid to rest in Vienna, the little King of Rome, who never even saw his kingdom.

THE CITIZEN KING

On the day that Napoleon abdicated for the second time, a nobleman hurried quietly back to Paris, made his way to the Palais Royale, and in spite of the protest of the gate keeper's wife, who took him for a madman, fell on his knees and kissed the stone stairs. This was Louis Philippe, the Duke of Orleans, whose father was a kinsman of Louis XVI. He had lived in exile many years and his joy was inexpressible when he found that there was to be again a king in France, and he could return to Paris. So he and his wife and family came back to the Palais Royale, where they lived simply and quietly during the reigns of Louis XVIII and Charles X. When Charles X was driven from France, Louis Philippe was preparing to flee also, when he found that the people had chosen him king. He was elected, not because of his noble blood, but because the people thought that he would make a good ruler. During his life in Paris, he had tried to make friends among the people, and not alone among the nobility. So Louis Philippe was called "King of the French," instead of "King of France," to show that he ruled by the will of his countrymen. Louis Philippe even gave up as national ensign the blue shield with the silver fleur-de-lis on

it, and used instead the cock, which was an old Gallic emblem, and the tricolor.

It must have seemed strange indeed for Louis Philippe to find himself a king after his life of exile. He had been so poor at one time, that he had earned his living by teaching mathematics in a Swiss school. Then he had traveled through England and had even visited America. There is a story that while Louis Philippe was in America he met with an accident in the midst of the woods. A settlement was near by, but no doctor was there. So Louis Philippe took out his own lancet and bled himself so skillfully that the people of the settlement begged him to stay and be their physician. But he thanked them, and went on his way. Perhaps he had dreams even then of being something more than a doctor.

Louis Philippe, "a little short, stout man, with head shaped like a pear, and surmounted with an elaborate brown wig," began his reign by calling himself the citizen king. He tried to do much for his country, and did succeed in having steam railways introduced and many fine silk mills built. But the people were divided into different political parties, and it seemed impossible to satisfy them all.

One party thought that it was not enough for all men to be of equal rank in the land, but believed

that the wealth ought also to be equally divided. These people had neither the white flag of the Bourbons, nor the tricolor for their emblem, but chose red caps for their party sign. They were often called, because of this, "The Reds." Louis Philippe found them to be the most dangerous men among his subjects. Some of "The Reds" constructed an infernal machine out of twenty-four guns, which was fired upon the royal carriage one day when the king and some of his children were driving out of the palace. But the machine missed fire, and Louis Philippe and his sons escaped, although fourteen bystanders were killed on the spot.

When Queen Marie Amelie heard of the attempted assassination of the king, she rushed out to meet him, and when she saw that he was really unharmed, she fell fainting into his arms. From this time she never left his side, not even when her daughter died in Belgium. They lived very happily together, and were devoted to their children, five sons and three daughters. Their eldest son, the Duke of Orleans, a handsome young man, was thrown from his carriage, and instantly killed. This was a great grief to Louis Philippe, for the young duke had been very popular and would doubtless have succeeded his father on the throne. As it was, the people became dissatisfied, and a mob once more formed in Paris.

Louis Philippe had his army, but he would not let them fire upon his own people. He told the mob that he would abdicate in favor of his little grandson, the son of the Duke of Orleans who was killed, with the child's mother as regent. Then Louis Philippe left the palace secretly, for his life was threatened by "The Reds," and reached England in safety.

The widowed Duchess of Orleans came bravely forth with her two boys, but the people met her with angry threats. She soon saw that it was impossible to hold the throne for her son, so she and her children sought refuge in England, and once more there was no King in France.

NAPOLEON III

WE have told the story of the last king of France, Louis Philippe, and now we come to the story of the last emperor. When the national assembly met after Louis Philippe's flight, they decided to have a republic instead of a kingdom and to be ruled by a president, who should have much the same power as has the President of the United States, and who, like him, should govern for a term of four years. Every man who was a French citizen, rich or poor, was to have a vote to decide who

should be president. The greatest number of votes was cast for Louis Napoleon, a nephew of the great Napoleon. He was sometimes called the prince-president.

Louis Napoleon as a boy had been a great favorite of the Emperor Napoleon and the Empress Josephine, and much of his boyhood was passed with them. He and his brother used to stand in the palace windows and long to take off their silk stockings and little kid boots and run out to paddle in the gutters. But this young prince was not allowed to do. On the day before Napoleon set out for Waterloo, little Louis Napoleon contrived to creep into the emperor's cabinet, where he was closeted with one of his marshals. He saw the troubled look on his uncle's face and, though too young to realize his great danger, begged him not to go away. When Napoleon laughed and told him not to fear because no one could hurt him, the boy still looked worried. Then his face lighted up:—

“Let me go with you, uncle. I will take care of you.”

The emperor took the little chap on his knee and kissed him. Then he turned to the marshal.

“Kiss him, marshal,” he said. “He will have a tender heart and a lofty spirit. Perhaps he is the hope of my race.”

After Waterloo, the emperor came back to Paris for a single night. As he stood with one foot on the step of the carriage that was to bear him into exile, he paused a moment to kiss little Louis Napoleon and his brother farewell.

A life of exile was beginning that same day for these two boys. Their mother fled with them to Switzerland, where they grew up in a gloomy old country house. When Louis Napoleon was quite a young man, he seemed to have cherished hopes of succeeding his famous uncle as emperor of France. He made two attempts to seize the crown, but both times he was unsuccessful. The second time he was taken prisoner and for a long time was kept shut up in the fortress of Ham. He was given a great deal of freedom here, but still the governor of the fortress was a man of strict honor and kept a close watch on his prisoner. Nevertheless, Louis Napoleon escaped. One day some carpenters and painters were to be at work in the fortress. Louis Napoleon, knowing this, told his servant, who was allowed to go in and out of the prison at his pleasure, to buy him an old blouse and a pair of overalls. As soon as the carpenters and painters began their work, Louis Napoleon put on these old clothes, cut off his black mustache, set a dark wig on his head, smeared his face with paint, thrust his feet into

wooden shoes, stuck an old clay pipe in his mouth, and, throwing a board over his shoulder, made his way out of the fortress unrecognized, for the sentries supposed him to be one of the workmen busy in the fortress.

Louis Napoleon had many other adventures, which we cannot tell here, before he became the prince-president of France. But he was not satisfied with this, for as president he did not have sufficient power. The Assembly was split up into many factions, all hostile to him. So Louis Napoleon determined to overthrow the unruly Assembly and lessen its power. He laid his plans very carefully, and one morning the people of Paris awoke to find the streets and squares filled with soldiers, and proclamations scattered broadcast announcing a new Constitution for which every citizen had the right to vote, and also stating that Louis Napoleon's presidency had been extended for the next ten years. Some of the wiser men saw that this was merely a stepping stone to the president becoming emperor. In fact, before the end of the next year, Louis put the question before the country, whether an empire should not be established with himself as emperor, and the answer was an overwhelming number of affirmative votes. So Louis Napoleon became emperor with the title of Napoleon III. There really never

had been any Napoleon II, but Napoleon I had given this title to his little son, the King of Rome, when he abdicated in his favor, so Louis Napoleon chose to be called Napoleon III.

Soon after he became emperor, Napoleon III married a Spanish lady of high rank, but not of royal blood, — Eugénie de Montijo. She was a very beautiful woman who had conceived a romantic interest in the prince when he was prisoner at Ham. When he became president, and later emperor, she and her mother were often seen at his court at Fontainebleau. Eugénie was a superb horse-woman and riding was the emperor's special accomplishment. One day they lost their way together in the woods. As they rested under a tree, Napoleon plaited a wreath of leaves and placed it in Eugénie's hair, saying: —

“I hope soon to replace it with a better one.”

Their wedding was very brilliant. The state carriages were regilded for the occasion, and the apartments in the Tuileries refurnished. The city of Paris voted over a hundred thousand dollars with which to buy Eugénie a diamond necklace as a wedding gift. Very gracefully she declined the necklace, but accepted the money, with which she endowed an orphan asylum. She was one of the loveliest women who ever came to the French

throne. The emperor's happiness was complete when a son was born to him. The little boy was given the title of Prince Imperial.

Napoleon III wished to be known as the Napoleon of Peace in contrast to his uncle, the Napoleon of War, but this was not possible. He had many foreign wars and the Red Republicans in Paris were always plotting against him. Finally the news came that the Spanish crown had been offered to a prince of Prussia. The French, always jealous of any increase of power in their neighbor and rival, Germany, determined to prevent Spain from having a German for king, even if it meant war.

Napoleon III saw that the only safe thing for him to do was to obey the desire of his people. He collected the army and went himself with his young son, the Prince Imperial, to meet the Germans. Misfortune after misfortune, and defeat after defeat, fell upon the French armies. Then came the terrible battle of Sedan, when Napoleon III was obliged to surrender himself to the Prussian king. All he could do for his people was to send back word to Paris to defend that city, for the Prussians were advancing to besiege it. The Parisians laid all the blame on Napoleon for the disasters of the war. They assembled and declared that the empire was at an end, and for the third time established a republic.

The Empress Eugénie escaped from Paris in disguise, and sought refuge in England. Napoleon III was well treated by his German captors and, after the close of the war, joined his wife and son in England. But he was suffering from a terrible disease and soon died in the arms of his loving wife, the empress.

THE SIEGE OF PARIS

THE people throughout France had voted for Napoleon III as emperor, but the people of Paris had always been hostile to him, and now were full of rejoicing at his overthrow. In their excitement at having the government once more in their own hands they seemed to forget the message Napoleon III had sent them, — that the Prussians were on their way to attack Paris. Suddenly they realized the coming disaster, and hurried to make preparations to withstand a siege.

There were hardly any soldiers in Paris, so they had to be called home from foreign lands. The fortifications were not complete and men were busy working on them day and night. All the railroads coming into Paris were loaded with provisions. Women and children, if their fathers or husbands could afford it, were sent from the city. The poor

peasants living outside of the walls hurried within and took possession of any of the empty houses that they could lay hands on. The broad avenues of Paris that Napoleon III had built were blocked with loaded wagons, fashionable teams, and flocks of sheep, all in one another's way, trying in vain to proceed. The trees in the beautiful park, the Bois de Boulogne, were cut down, and all the deer, swans, and wild fowls had to be shot, for their homes and food had been taken away from them. The villages just outside the city were burned to the ground. This was done so that the Prussians should not find shelter so near Paris, and also that the Parisians might watch their movements. Two weeks after the battle of Sedan, the Prussian armies came. On September 19, the trains ceased running, the entrances into Paris were blocked up, and the fifty-one gates of the city were closed. The siege of Paris had begun.

The story of this siege is terrible. The rest of France scarcely lifted a hand to help the capital. Paris had tyrannized over the country, had set up one government only to tear it down, and had caused France so much suffering that the country felt she was now receiving her just punishment. But even worse than this desertion was the turmoil within the city itself. The Red Republicans were feared as

much as the Prussians. Hardly a day went by when Parisians were not fighting Parisians.

The Prussians had taken up their headquarters in the beautiful palace of Versailles, and from thence proceeded to blockade Paris. No one could enter or leave the city. For months the siege continued. One of the worst things the Parisians had to bear was the lack of news. They could not tell what was going on in France; they could not get any word to their wives and children, for the Prussians allowed no newspapers or mail to go out or to come into Paris. Finally the Parisians overcame this difficulty to a certain extent. They made balloons which could carry four or five people at once, and these they sent out at night when it was too dark for the Prussians to see and fire at them.

Besides carrying out mail, the men in the balloons took with them many carrier pigeons, that brought back messages to the besieged people. Some of these messages were written in such fine script that they could be read only by the aid of a microscope. This was done so that as much news as possible might be crowded in one message, for a pigeon could carry but little. Some of the pigeons were shot by the Prussians, but many flew safely home, and great was the excitement when one of them alighted on a roof in the city.

It is hard for us to realize how terrible a siege is. On Christmas day a few boxes of bonbons were sold, but most people were thankful if they could secure a potato or a small package of coffee as a Christmas gift. Meat in particular had become very scarce. Even the wild animals in the Zoological Gardens had to be killed for food. To add to the misery of the Parisians, the winter was the coldest that had been known for twenty years.

The Prussians sent their terrible shells down into the city. Hundreds of people were killed; hundreds were starving to death. Soldiers froze at their posts because their wretched, tattered clothing could not keep them warm. No one dared to say the word *capitulate*, although one of the newspapers printed the fact that by February 3 there would not be a mouthful of bread in Paris. Then the brave city was forced to surrender.

The terms of peace were hard. Two provinces, Alsace and Lorraine, which Louis XIV had won for France, had to be given up, as well as two fine fortresses. The nation was forced to pay an enormous sum of money to Prussia, and had to allow the Prussian army to enter Paris. The war which the French began so enthusiastically was at an end, and France found herself a smaller country, with an overturned throne and a ruined capital.

THE COMMUNE

You would have thought that when the Prussians marched back to their own country, Paris would have been left too weak and weary of bloodshed to desire anything but peace. Instead, Paris was soon to become the scene of even more atrocious deeds than those of the siege. The Red Republicans had been gathering their forces all during the Franco-Prussian war, hoping at its close to seize the government in their own hands. The moment the treaty was signed, they began their work. They barricaded the streets of Paris and closed the gates of the city. The government in terror fled to Versailles, to await the arrival of French troops that had been held prisoners of war. The Red Republicans ignored the government at Versailles and set up in Paris a government of their own. They gave it the name of Commune (an old word for a town council), and called themselves Communists. But these men could not rule well, for they had no respect for property, law, order, or religion.

They turned the clergy out of their churches and the Sisters of Charity out of the hospitals. Some of the best and holiest men of the clergy, who had spent their lives in helping these Red Republicans, and who had worked day and night during

the siege to lessen suffering and procure food for the starving, were mercilessly shot.

A feeling of rage against the Bonapartes arose, and a mob tore down the beautiful column in the Place Vendôme that had been molded out of Napoleon's old cannon to commemorate his victories.

The women were even more violent than the men. They went around the city singing songs of liberty, bearing weapons, and making terrible threats. All France was against these terrible Red Republicans, who seemed more like madmen than human beings, but there were not yet enough loyal government troops in Paris to overcome them.

Finally they began to set fire to the buildings. The royal palace of the Tuileries was burned to the ground. Poor old women, with bent backs and haggard faces, were seen crawling about the streets carrying little cans of petroleum. For every house they set on fire they received ten francs, which is about two dollars. The provisional government at Versailles, and all true Frenchmen, could not bear to see their beloved Paris thus demolished. An army was at last collected and it marched against the Communists, shooting down men and women alike. No mercy was shown. The Red Republicans gathered for a final resistance in one of the large cemeteries, but the soldiers, with better weap-

ons and discipline, overcame them. Many of the revolutionists were killed on the spot, many more were hurried off to Versailles to be shot, and many were sent into exile. The Red Republic was red indeed with blood.

You will be glad to hear that now peace and order were soon restored. The Third Republic was formed, and ever since then France has been governed by a president.

Adolphe Thiers was elected first president of the Third Republic. He had been a poor boy, brought up in southern France. His cousin, who was a poet, became interested in the lad, and gave him an education. Thiers well repaid this kindness. From the time he entered school he was always at the head of his class. He devoted himself to the study of history and was the author of many famous historical works. He negotiated the peace with Germany, and had helped to suppress the Commune, thus making history in his own person. He was a collector of valuable historical curios and documents, and his house was a rich and interesting museum. When he died, he bequeathed it, with all his collections, to the city of Paris.

Through the years that have elapsed since 1871, there have been many pretenders to the French throne, — kinsmen of the Bourbons, or of Louis

Philippe, or of the Bonapartes, — but France has stood firm for a republican form of government, with a president at its head, chosen by the people.

FRANCE OF TO-DAY

MODERN France is a beautiful land. No signs of the terrible days of revolution and foreign war are now to be seen. She stands proudly and justly as one of the great countries of Europe.

On her western coasts are great fisheries. In the south the land is covered with vineyards. Huge flocks of sheep wander over plains where once stretched immense forests through which the Gauls chased the buffaloes. Mulberry trees are so extensively grown that France heads the world as a great silk manufacturing nation. Canals, rivers and railway systems connect the various parts of the Republic with one another and with the rest of the continent.

The French people have always been intelligent and fond of learning. The Republic has done much toward educating the people, for the government has control of all the public schools from the primary grades up to the university.

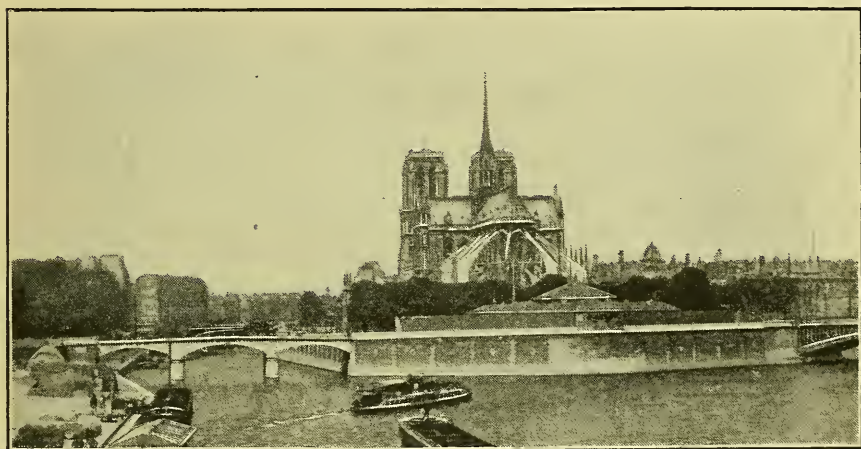
When you go to Paris, you will find it hard to believe the stories I have been telling you about the

dreadful siege in 1870-1871. The trees have grown up again in the Bois de Boulogne, and the swans are sailing about serenely on the lakes. In the streets are throngs of gayly dressed people, driving in open carriages, riding on the top of the big omnibuses, sitting at the open cafés, or strolling up and down the great avenue, the Champs-Élysées. You will see children playing merrily about in the Tuileries and Luxembourg gardens, and little street urchins dangling their bare legs in the fountain basins or watching the open-air Punch and Judy shows. Some of the children are accompanied by nurses, who wear long white aprons, and caps with streamers that float down their backs to the hem of their black dresses. You walk along the Champs-Élysées to the Place de la Concorde, famous the world over. It was in this square, then called the Place de la Revolution, that Louis XVI was put to death in 1793.

As you continue your walk, you come upon the open square where the Palace of the Tuileries once stood. It was here, you will remember, that Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were so long imprisoned, and here Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie gave so many splendid fêtes. You cross the square and enter the old palace of the Louvre, now one of the finest picture galleries in the world. As you

stroll through the long rooms you see famous paintings by great artists, with many of which photographs have already made you familiar.

When you tire of the pictures, perhaps, you walk out to the banks of the river Seine and cross over to this island part of the city, called the Île de la Cité. It is so small that you can scarcely believe that once this island alone was the capital of the kingdom.



Church of Notre Dame

Looming up before you are the two towers of the great cathedral of Notre Dame. Can you imagine, as you walk down the high-vaulted nave, with the soft light streaming in through the stained glass windows, what splendid pageants of the many kings of France have taken place within these very walls? But no more brilliant scene was ever enacted here than when Napoleon, seizing the crown from the

hands of the Pope at the altar, made himself Emperor of the French. If you climb up in one of the towers of Notre Dame, among the gargoyles, you get a fine view of the city spread out on both banks of the Seine — up and down the river ply little steamers, and the scene is a gay and animated one.

Leaving Notre Dame, you visit the Palais de Justice, or Law Courts, on the other side of the island. This building was an old palace of the kings of France, and the most interesting part of it is the beautiful little chapel, with walls that seem one blaze of stained glass, built by Saint Louis in the thirteenth century.

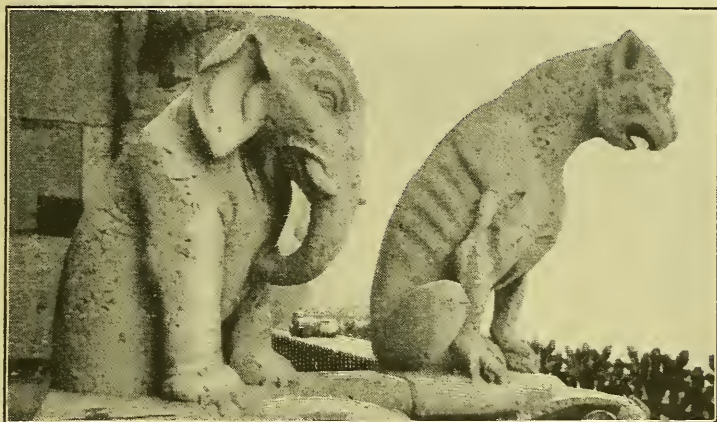
Paris is full of famous things for you to see. Under the old hôtel of the abbots of Cluny, now a museum, may be seen parts of the great baths belonging to a Roman palace built by one of the later emperors of Rome who resided in Gaul. In the museum itself are many relics of mediæval times, and beautiful tapestries, carvings, and jewels.

Then, one day, you take your place in the train, and in a short time reach Versailles, and visit the wonderful palace of Louis XIV, where he used to hold his splendid fêtes. If you follow one of the paths through the trees of the park, you will come suddenly upon the little dairy house, called Le Petit

Trianon, where Marie Antoinette and her court ladies used to play at being dairymaids.

Another day you go out, perhaps, to Saint Denis, and look among the royal tombs for the grave of good King Dagobert. The old warden of the church will show you the flag that Saint Louis took with him on his crusades.

Nor must you neglect to visit the château of Fontainebleau, filled with memories of Francis I.



Gargoyles of Notre Dame

There you will see the famous horseshoe stairway, leading up from the great courtyard, where Napoleon stood when he said good-by to his Old Guards before he went into exile on the island of Elba.

A drive through the forest of Fontainebleau will bring you to the little village of Barbizon, now famous the world over because of two great painters

who once lived there, — Millet and Rosa Bonheur. Many other celebrated artists, among whom you may have heard the names of Corot and Rousseau, loved to paint in this beautiful forest.

So, some time, if you travel through the “pleasant land of France,” and visit all the historic places you have read about in these little stories, you will come to feel more and more the *reality* of these kings and queens, these brave heroes, and these good women, and will realize what a living thing the memory of them is to-day.

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